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For Everybody

MARCH

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FC

The Man I Pity Most

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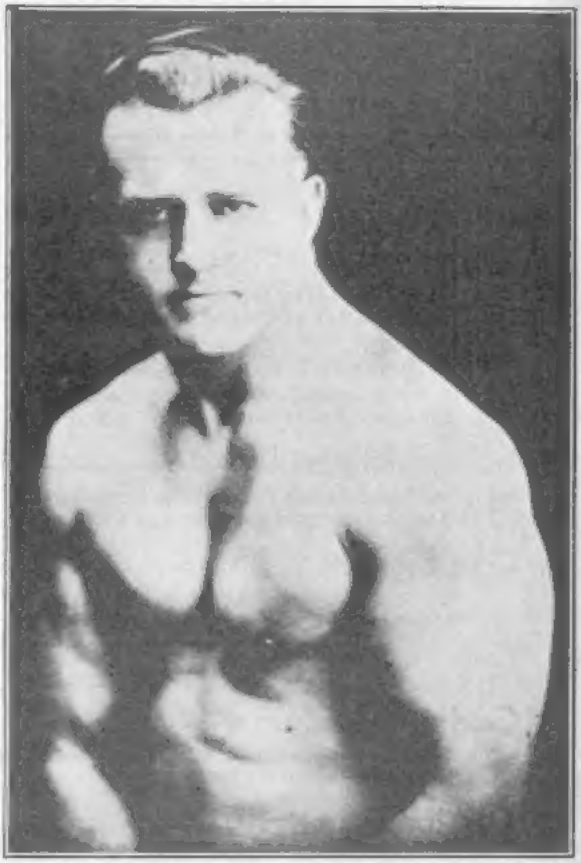

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RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

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A Magazine For Everybody

March, 1930 Vol. I—No. 4

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A great line-up of railroad stars with the best in railroad fiction and features, outstanding among which are :

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By Charles W. Tyler

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By E. S. Dellinger

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FC

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CHARLES H. HOGAN

Manager, Department of Shop Labor, New York Central Lines

F J

RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

Vol. 1 — For Everybody — No. 1

MARCH, 1930

Hogan of the 999

Uncle Charley, the Man Who Wheeled the Empire State Express Into a Record, Bats Out His Sixty-Fifth Year in Actual Railroad Service

By Charles Frederick Carter

AFTER a man had been railroading sixty-five years it does seem as if he ought to be ready to quit, now doesn't it Most men give up in a much shorter time. In fact, railroad managements insist that their employees, with rare exceptions, shall retire on reaching their seventieth birthday.

But after Charles H. Hogan, of Buffalo, New York, had celebrated his seventieth birthday, the New York Central management gave him a more difficult job than he ever had previously held, and in effect, though not in formal words, invited him to step on the gas. He did just that.

After another decade had slipped by, during which Hogan made a brilliant record of achievement, a considerable group of fellow officials helped him celebrate his eightieth anniversary, but said nothing about his retirement. When Hogan reaches his hundredth birthday the New York Central may consider letting him have a little time off; but, mind you, it is not committing itself to anything

For the benefit of the minority who may not readily recall who Charles H Hogan is, let the fact be here recorded that he is one of our national characters, like Edison and Ford; that he is the man who, thirty-seven years ago, coaxed the highest officially clocked speed ever got from a locomotive. He is manager of the department of shop labor of the New York Central, and has conducted delicate and difficult negotiations with the railroad shop crafts with such brilliant success that he has won the confidence, esteem and gratitude of both employees and management; that in his long career he has developed into a sage, philosopher and friend of man, and an ornament to the honorable craft of railroading; that,

last, but not least of all, he is to New York Central folk, and to his friends elsewhere, "Uncle Charley."

At his eightieth birthday dinner, January 8, 1930, Vice President Walber, of the New York Central, referring to the marvelous development in railroading that has taken place in the last sixty-five years, all of which Hogan had not only witnessed, but had an active part in and had contributed toward, asked his hearers to consider what was involved.

Hogan's name first appeared on a New York Central pay roll April 1, 1865, as water boy for a section gang of which his father was foreman on that part of the system now known as the Auburn Road at Leroy, twenty-four miles southwest of Rochester. He was then fifteen years old. After the average amount of schooling for a village boy of that age and period, he had been apprenticed to a carriage iron maker, but did not like the trade, and abandoned it. You see, ever since he had been old enough to think about such things, Hogan had wanted to be a locomotive engineer.

He did not continue long as a water boy, but soon found an opportunity to go braking, from which he quickly graduated to fireman in the usual routine of those days. Two weeks after he began his first work for a railroad company, Lincoln was assassinated. The Union consisted of thirty-six States, with a population of thirty-five million. In these States 35,085 miles of railroad were operated.

Development of the railroad had really only just started. Rails were of iron, very light iron at that. Crushed stone ballast was a luxury to come along in later years. Therefore, dust raised by the passing trains was an abhorrent nuisance. Split switches had not come into vogue in America. Their place was taken by stub switches, the movable rails of which were wont to expand under the ardent rays of summer suns so much that they could not be thrown, thereby causing brakemen to use language which made that of a steamboat mate in a hurry, sound like a quotation from a Rollo book. When these old iron rails were not stuck fast by expansion, they went to the other extreme, leaving a broad gap between the ends, which were sometimes battered under the weight of passing engines until they were frayed and split into slivers until they could have been used for whisk brooms. Switch stands were likely to be of wood, with targets that moved in a vertical arc like a pair of shears.

Locomotives were just settling down into the once familiar eight-wheeled American type with no tractive effort worth mentioning, no injector, superheater, feed-water heater, brick arch, stoker, automatic bell ringer or any other of the mechanical refinements of later years, and with a steam pressure of 135 pounds. To oil the cylinders the fireman waited until the train was coasting, with steam shut off, when he would seize the tallow pot nestling snugly against the boiler head and pour a portion of its contents into brass cups on the boiler head, then opened a cock to allow steam to blow the lubricant to where it was wanted Or, perchance, he had to take the tallow pot under one arm, crawl along the running board out to a cup on the steam chest. This saved several feet of brass pipe. It did not matter much if the fireman fell off during his excursion to the front end, for firemen were cheap in those days.

Passenger coaches were lighted by oil lamps, and heated more or less by

wood-burning stoves at either end. If the passenger wanted a drink he did not go to a sanitary cooler to quaff ice water from an individual paper cup. Once in a while a brakeman might pass through the car carrying a fantastic tin can resembling a deformed teapot, from which he served drinks of lukewarm water to the thirsty in a glass that was never washed.

Pullman's celebrated cars were not yet in service, the airbrake had not been invented, neither had automatic train control nor automatic block signals nor telephones. All train dispatching was by telegraph. The first transcontinental line was not to be completed for a little more than four years, tourist traffic was a thing unknown, as were dining cars. If passengers were hungry they waited until the train stopped ten minutes for refreshments, if it ever did. In short, railroads of 1865 were not like railroads of 1930.

An Attack of Wanderlust

LIKE many another youth, Charles Hogan developed a severe attack of itching feet when he was seventeen years old.

Going to Omaha, Nebraska, he found a position as machinist's helper in the Union Pacific shops two years before the famous golden spike was driven which completed the first transcontinental line. Omaha was then a town of fifteen thousand inhabitants, a busy place, and a trifle raw.

Opportunities for ambitious young men to get ahead were plentiful on the new railroad. Hogan at once attracted the attention of master mechanic Joseph McConnell, by good work, steady application and studious habits. He was not satisfied with such information as he could pick up in his daily round, but read everything he could get, first on railroads, after that on other practical subjects.

After six months in the shops, Hogan, in his eighteenth year, was given a chance to go firing with engineer Lou Tarrington on freight between Omaha and Grand Island, a nice little run of 144 miles, which was quite long enough for a lad of eighteen to swing a scoop shovel, knock out clinkers and hoe out ash pans. He did not waste time sleeping after he got in, but devoted his lay-over to polishing the jacket and bright-work in the cab, the bell, and blacking the front end while Tarrington cleaned the headlight, filled the lamp, and packed pistons, valve stems and pump, for such was the custom of the day. If they worked fast enough engineer and fireman could finish before they were called to go out. Sometimes they could even find time to snatch a cup of coffee and a sandwich before starting.

In spite of the rough times and new country young Hogan was fortunate in falling in with steady men who took an interest in helping him along in his chosen calling. Tarrington did all he could to develop the young man into a competent fireman. Traveling Engineer Blake Howard was Hogan's good friend, and prepared him for the examination which he passed with a good score, whereupon he was set up and given an engine out of Rawlins, Wyoming, 680 miles west of Omaha, a run which he held for some time.

One of the many devices which the railroad still lacked was the rotary snow plow. In a region where storms were more numerous in winter than seemed really necessary, the only way of keeping the road open was to couple two or three locomotives behind a leading engine equipped with a push plow. On sighting a drift the engines under

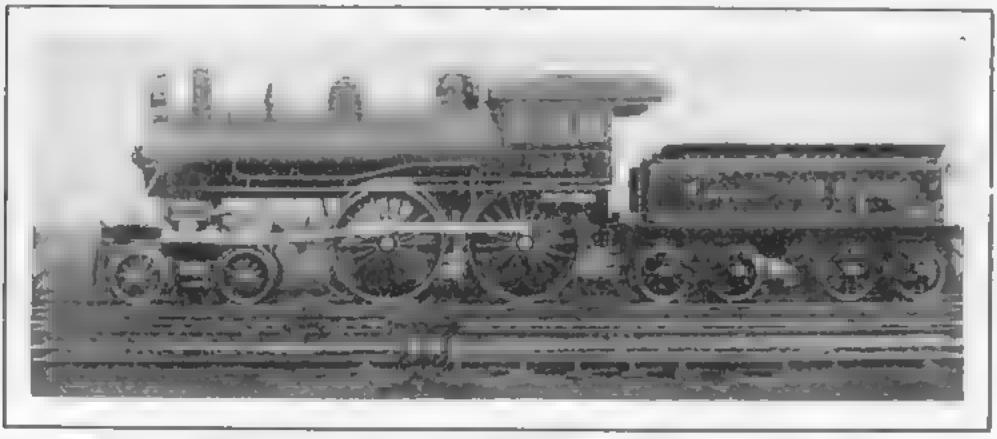
full steam would plunge into it as fast as they could turn their wheels. Usually they would stick fast and have to be shoveled out by section men picked up on the way and carried along in a caboose. Then the engines would back up and take another run at the drift until they got through or were hopelessly stalled

Under such circumstances it was no rare thing for trains to be snow-bound for days at a time. On one memorable trip Hogan was a week going from Rawlins to Bitter Creek, a distance of seventy-four miles.

The West was then, indeed, wild and woolly. The offscourings of the earth flocked to the new towns along the railroad, affording unrivaled facilities for expediting traffic on the broad and easy way that leadeth to destruction. But in such unpromising surroundings Hogan developed the traits of character which have endeared him to all with whom he comes in contact. Even to this day old-timers on the Union Pacific are telling, nearly forty years later, how Hogan not only kept himself out of trouble, but was constantly acting as peacemaker, smoothing over difficulties, making life more worth living.

Returns to the Home Road

It appears that there was a young lady back in New York State, a long, long way from Green River, Wyo-



This is the High Wheeled American Type Locomotive With Which Eagle Eye Hogan Set a World Record Officially Clocked at 112 Miles per Hour

ming, in whom he was interested. So, on December 1, 1871, Hogan returned to the New York Central as a locomotive engineman, and not long thereafter the young lady in question became his wife.

Hogan promptly built up such a reputation as a safe and dependable engineer that he was selected to pull the special train on which Commodore Vanderbilt traveled. He won the confidence and esteem of the Commodore It was because of this that Hogan was the first representative of a committee of employees who ever called upon Commodore Vanderbilt. It may be worth mentioning in this connection that Hogan not only got what he went after on this occasion, but that he also earned expressions of gratitude from Commodore Vanderbilt for telling him about conditions of which he had never heard.

When not pulling Vanderbilt's special train, Hogan had a passenger run between Syracuse and Buffalo. Here he was destined to make railroad history. It seems that previous to October, 1891, the fastest long distance passenger train in this country was scheduled at forty miles an hour. In England at that time there was a long distance train on a schedule of fifty-one miles an hour. The management of the New York Central felt that with its splendid roadbed and other facilities for the protection of fast trains, it might install the fastest train in the world.

After making a few special trips for the purpose of determining just what was necessary to operate such a train, the "Empire State Express," known the world over, was installed on October 26, 1891, on a schedule of 52½ miles per hour for the 440 miles between New York and Buffalo. That gave this country a mile and a half per hour lead on all long distance trains in the world, which meant a speed of about 60 miles an hour for the entire distance, taking into consideration the number of stops that had to be made.

While preparations for the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893 were in progress, it became known that competitive exhibits would include locomotives and other equipment. The New York Central management determined to build for exhibition a locomotive worthy of the reputation of the road. This locomotive was designed and built at West Albany shops of the New York Central, under the direction of William Buchanan, master mechanic. The announced plan was to produce a locomotive that actually would develop a speed of one hundred miles or more an hour. This locomotive, given the number "999," after a few trial trips and a few changes had been made, accomplished the feat.

The supreme burst of speed was attained May 10, 1893, when the management planned a final test on the westbound Empire State Express. The train was a little late at Syracuse, so when the 999 was coupled on, Engineman Charles H. Hogan was given to understand that if he took the bridle off no one would find fault with him. The 999 had cylinders 19 x 24 inches, and drivers 86 inches in diameter. Four cars was the limit for the Empire State Express in those days

Although Hogan kept 'em rolling nicely for the eighty miles from Syracuse to Rochester, the grand finale was reserved for the thirty-six miles from Batavia to Buffalo. For two miles west of Batavia there is a slightly rising grade, then a level stretch of fourteen miles, then a slight downward incline the rest of the way to Buffalo. After passing the curve outside of Batavia the road is straight except for a slight curve at Winspier bridge.

According to the testimony of a speed recorder and two men with stop watches in the buffet car, one of the thirty-six miles was covered at the rate of 112½ miles an hour. Other miles were covered in thirty-eight seconds, forty-one and forty-two seconds respectively. The management had achieved its ambition to have the fastest train in the world.

All this fancy sprinting is over and done with now. No more does the engineer take the bridle off whenever he feels so disposed. There are speed limits to be observed; and the engineer who fails to observe them may look forward confidently to doing a great deal of explaining. The great art of

running an engine is not so much the ability to make the wheels go round as it is to deliver the passengers at their destination alive

signal governing the crossing was on the fireman's side That personage had been warned to keep a sharp lookout, but did not speak up when the en-

A Lot of Difference in Main Line Batt[illegible] Here He's Standing Shaking Hands With Bob Butterfield, [illegible] This Photo Was Made in the Cab of [illegible]

If he is to keep out of danger an engineer must have a sixth sense, not to mention plenty of common sense To illustrate, Hogan was approaching Buffalo Creek crossing with a passenger train one very stormy night The

gineer thought he should In reply to a question the fireman said he saw no signal. Although it was darker than the proverbial stack of black cats, Hogan knew he was right on that signal, so he stopped. The signal was at dan-

ger, and the crossing was occupied by a train. If Hogan's prudent sixth sense had not prompted him to stop there would have been a frightful slaughter.

On another occasion Hogan was approaching Lyons at sixty miles an hour where there was a railroad crossing at grade. Although the signal governing the crossing was at clear, the engineer clapped on the air and brought his train to a stop with the pilot within two car lengths of a coal train wending its leisurely way over the crossing. The engineer had not been satisfied with the signal indication, because there were certain lights low down beyond the crossing that he was accustomed to see; and when he did not see them on this occasion his alert mind warned him they must be hidden by a train on the crossing

Hogan's engine blew out a cylinder head approaching East Palmyra one day. He shut off and applied the brakes; but reasoning that if he stopped he could not start the train again with the cripple, which would mean a long delay on account of the engine failure, but that he might keep going on one side four miles farther to East Palmyra, where there was a work train engine which could be commandeered to take the train into Buffalo, he released the brakes, gave her steam, and worked the problem out exactly as he had calculated. There was no delay, no explanations to make, just good railroading.

As a result of the long series of experiments the Exposition Flyer was placed in service in the summer of 1893, making the run between New York and Chicago in twenty hours, the fastest time for the longest distance the world had known up to that time.

Owing to the prolonged business depression which began in 1893, the Exposition Flyer was taken off the road at the close of the World's Fair, to be resurrected as the Twentieth Century Limited as soon as traffic prospects seemed to warrant making the run of 960 miles between New York and Chicago in twenty hours.

It has been said of Hogan that he was "never up on the carpet," "never cost the company a dollar." So thoroughly was his reputation as a steady, responsible man established that soon after making his sensational speed record he was taken off his engine July 1, 1893, and made traveling engineer on the western division. Shortly thereafter he was promoted to master mechanic at Buffalo.

Here he quickly proved that he was as capable as an official as he was as an engineman. One of Hogan's digressions from established routine was a fair imitation of a police court to deal with infractions of rules.

Just, Firm, and Friendly

Discipline among engineers and firemen when Hogan took up his new duties apparently was no better than it should have been. Hogan quickly straightened things out. When a man violated the rules he was not called into the master mechanic's office for a private, long-winded gabfest. Hogan did not do business that way. All the delinquents were assembled in the master mechanic's outer room each Monday morning. Hogan, with his clerk at his side, would stand on the other side of the rail. The clerk would read off the charge against the first man on the list. Then would ensue something like this:

"Flanigan, how did you come to miss your train Thursday morning?"

"I went back to sleep."

"Don't let it happen again."

The clerk would read another charge.

"Young man, this is your third offense. Go and get your time."

Thus in half an hour Hogan would dispose of matters that might easily have been permitted to consume the day. Moreover, his administration of justice was performed in full public view, so that it had a maximum moral effect.

It was not very long before infractions of rules were few.

In May, 1904, Hogan was made division superintendent of motive power at Depew. In August, 1910, he was made assistant superintendent of motive power, line east, stationed at Albany, a position which he held until he had reached his seventieth anniversary, when, under the rules, he was eligible for retirement.

But the New York Central management, believing that some rules are more honored in the breach than in the observance, was unwilling to lose the services of so valuable a man as Hogan had shown himself to be. Instead of being retired he was made manager, department of shop labor, with headquarters at Buffalo, to smooth out the extremely difficult conditions arising from demoralization under Federal control.

This demoralization was aggravated by the shopmen's strike of 1922. But Hogan mastered every situation, not by asserting autocratic authority, but by employing the antithesis of such tactics. With serene poise he held the scales of justice even between employer and employee until he had won the implicit confidence of both; and in doing so rendered a service the value of which cannot be computed in dollars and cents.

No wonder that Vice President Walber took as the text for a notable address at the dinner which was given by his fellow officials on Hogan's eightieth birthday the "Personality" which had drawn them together. Speech and dinner were deserved tributes to an outstanding character which honors the profession of railroading.

BREEDLOVE'S HIGHBALL DRAG

IT is fitting to add to the long list of unsung heroes of the railroad the name of Conductor J. H. Breedlove, of the Nebraska division of the Union Pacific. Skipper Breedlove, on a November evening back in 1900, was called to head west with a freight train which was supposed to reach Grand Island at a certain advertised time. In those good old days of single track and plenty of chances, this train held schedule authority as No. 19.

On this particular night J. P. Cary, who was then superintendent, was doing everything in his power to keep this train hitting the ball. Conductor Breedlove, together with George McQuade, the eagle-eye on the run, and Claud Collier, the fireman, all pledged to do their best, and with the help of a quick-witted dispatcher, No. 19 went through with but two stops. At Grand Island it was found that the train had made the unprecedented time of three hours and twenty-three minutes for the 150 miles.

Breedlove, incidentally, is the only one of the crew which made that record who is still in the service of the U. P.

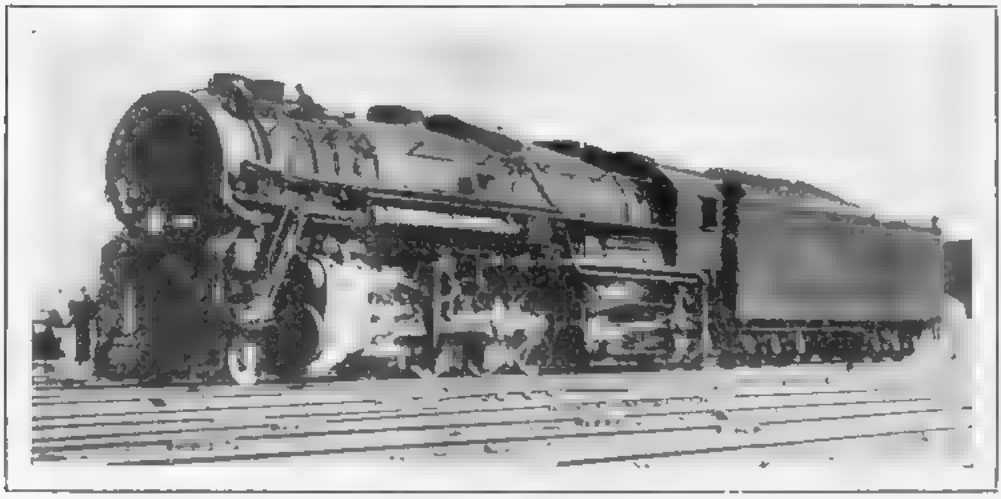
New England's Biggest Freight Power

Ready for the Long Haul

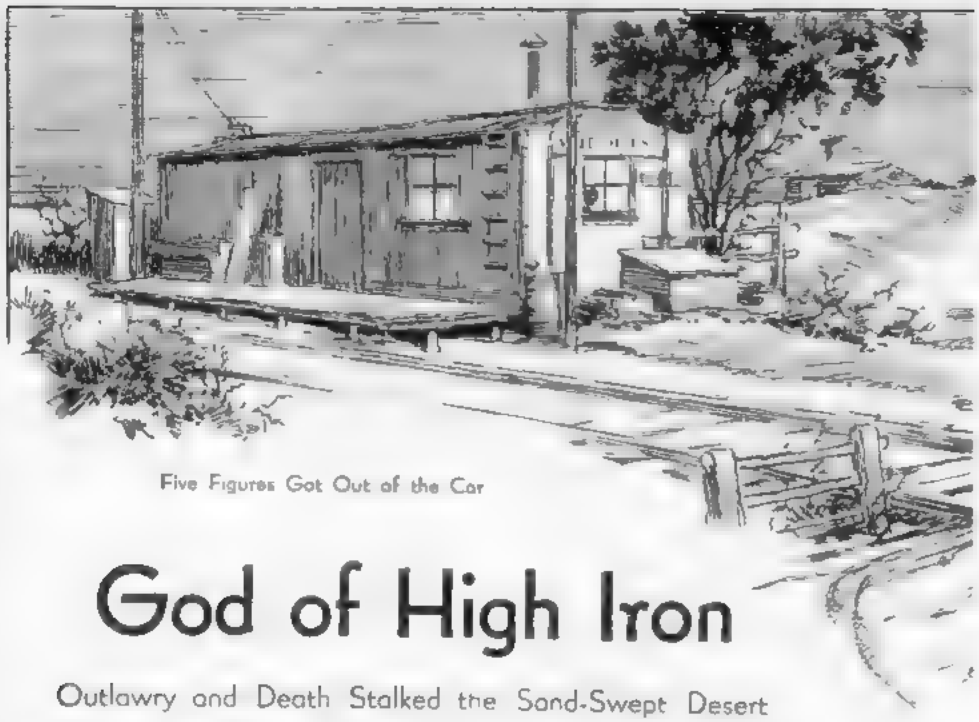
A NEW fleet of super-power locomotives, leviathans of the rails, 100 feet long, able to haul the heaviest freight trains on the 200-mile run from the Hudson River gateway in New York to Boston with only one stop *en route* for water, have been placed in service on the Boston and Maine Railroad.

The new plus-locomotives, with their great tenders carrying 18,000 gallons of water and 24 tons of coal, are the biggest in New England. They dwarf in comparison the huge engines that amazed New Englanders with their size only a few years ago. Boston and Maine enginemen have dubbed them "Camels," because of their tremendous water capacity. With the pulling power of 3,400 horses, they can haul the heaviest freight loads from Boston to Portland, or from East Deerfield to Boston and similar runs, without stopping for water.

Each cost $100,000, weighs 337 tons, and has a tractive power with booster of 81,400 pounds



This Engine Laughs at Tonnage



Five Figures Got Out of the Car

God of High Iron

Outlawry and Death Stalked the Sand-Swept Desert Division, and Destiny Hinged On a Single Spark of Life

By Charles W. Tyler

NO. 1, the Indian—crack extra-fare train of the Pacific Coast and Transcontinental Lines—was thundering west. Beating out the miles, as she came pelting down past Squaw Man, laying steel under her pilot at the rate of five thousand two hundred and eighty every sixty seconds. A Mountain-type passenger hauler, with a white feather and a red stack, and twelve big Pullmans, streaking across a silvered mesaland toward Amargosa.

Stepping through the dew!

Steel on steel. And the echoing crash of it stirring distant echoes from red, striated cliffs, to send hurtling back to other ramparts of erosion the joyous tempest of her going. Conqueror of the last frontier; monarch of the Cañon Division — queen of the wasteland, whipping west, time her enemy, distance her ceaseless antagonist. Screaming defiance, reeling on madly, as she fought to regain twenty-four minutes, stolen somewhere down the way she had come. That was No. 1.

Ahead, a white and gleaming finger stabbed the desert fastness, while a yellow tongue licked the gray gloom as the reflection of fire play flicked upward from the fire-box and wiped the smoke streamers that flattened back over the ventilator-studded car roofs with its golden glow. Trailing the locomotive and baggage car came the sleek Pullmans, their burnished sides set with yellow squares of illumination.

Lights gleamed from the windows

of the train's two diners, from the club car and the parlor of the observation In the sleepers were intermittent duller patches where berths were already in the process of being made ready for the night. At the rear smoldered the red embers that were the marker light, while in the center of the brass-rimmed observation platform the ruddy disk that carried in illuminated letters the name of the road and the name of the train flaunted its prideful identification of the Indian.

A full moon and low desert stars lent a magic touch, caressing the slender threads of steel that banded the horizons. A hoary lace edged the high rims and juniper-dotted slopes, kissing full an upthrust pillar here and there the sluggish thread of a muddy stream

Crocker, Big Jim of Irontown, was at the throttle. He sagged outward across the padded arm-rest, his bleak

eyes sighting through slitted lids along the path of the headlight. His body, fully relaxed, gave to the lurch and sway of the engine in lazy little vacillations.

Tommy Frame, on the deck of the 3692, cocked an eye at the steam gauge, while he flicked a passing glance at the water glass; then reached for his scoop. His toe caught the pedal of the air doors and they jerked open with a clang. Deftly the man of the deck hooked coal into those back corners; then snapped a number of scoopfuls onto the white spots which his expert eye detected in the blinding, roaring inferno under the crown sheet. The No. 3 shovel clattered from the door-ring and the heavy doors banged shut, submerging the cab again in gloom.

No. 1 heeled to the tangent of the curve at Bandit Bend and straightened away dizzily toward the sag at Wild Horse. A dusky waiter, tray-laden and white teeth flashing, balanced himself beside a table in the first diner.

"Jes' a little rough to-night, suh."

The gentleman addressed grunted. "Worse than a storm in the China Sea."

The woman opposite glanced out of the window at the fleeting landscape.

"Late, I suppose."

"Yas'm. Ole man Jim givin' us a ride."

In a Pullman, an old couple sat close together, still half timorous in this, their great adventure as they journeyed to a western land long dreamed of.

"Tired, Martha?"

"No, Jonathan. I'm jest enjoyin' of it all a sight."

"Sort of a honeymoon—ain't it?"

"Yes." A wrinkled old hand went out, softly searching for its gnarled, toil-worn mate. "Niagree was away out west to us then, Jonathan."

The man shook his head.

"I declare, I didn't know there was so much west. Makes Fitchburg, Massachusetts, seem a long ways off."

In another car a young mother was soothing a fretful baby. A middle-aged couple were poring over a railroad folder. A salesman was checking an order list. In a drawing room a bridge game was in progress. A child was bouncing a ball in the narrow corridor beyond, stealing a few last minutes before the call to bed.

A father and mother and two youngsters were having a happy little dinner party all their own in their section, the laughter of the boy and girl ringing through the car.

In the parlor of the observation were gathered the usual cross-section of train travelers. A youth and a fair young maiden, train acquaintances, had their eyes on the observation platform, waiting an opportunity to slip into the first chairs that would be vacated. Two business men were deep in some discussion. A solid, matronly woman was reading. A bright-eyed woman was at the writing desk.

Several faces reflected utter boredom. Nothing to do; no one worthwhile to talk to; dinner over and a long night ahead. It was a tedious, humdrum trip

A shrill, penetrating whistle blast, a prolonged shriek that ripped savagely through the night, sounded from the engine. Followed an almost imperceptible slackening of speed, a slight easing off of the mad, seemingly reckless pace that the Indian had been setting.

Far ahead, a faint speck of red was cast against the gray background of the desert night. It was only a pin-point, that sullen glow, but the keen, watchful eye of Big Jim had readily detected its presence.

There was a red board at Wild Horse.

"What in hell would that hammerhead of a dispatcher be handin' us here?" swore the engineer, his hand dropping from the whistle cord to ease the throttle in a little. "We'd be on time into Amargosa if we didn't get stabbed."

"If that cock-eyed ham in the telegraph office is asleep, we'll go in and kill 'im," the fireman yelled across the cab

"Goin' to lose our run through the sag," growled Big Jim.

No. 1 lost headway. Crocker made an air application, and there was a distinct backward tug of the heavy cars. The headlight smeared its white flood over a number of nondescript cars in a siding, caught up a water tank, crane, tool house; touched the long, low structure that housed the families of workmen, wiped across the row of cottonwoods there and smeared, in quick baptism, the station itself and the gaunt mast that carried at its peak two wide-flung arms.

The pop opened with a bang as the Lig 3692 came opposite the dingy little station at Wild Horse. Brakes screeched, fire shot from the wheels and the Indian, lord of high iron, ground to a vicious, protesting stop—square in the midst of a murderous setting of outlawry.

II

Danny O'Neil.

Outwardly a sodden, blear-eyed bit of human flotsam, cast here and there on the ceaseless tides of life. Inwardly a big-hearted, big-souled railroad man whose human weaknesses and passions had always been too vehement for the tiny guiding thread called will.

Danny O'Neil — ex-hogger, ex-boomer, drifter, bum. This is his story, and it is set down for you to review, without pretence or apology; for Danny O'Neil received no favor of any man, nor asked it. Whatever opinion you may form, what your judgment of him may be, the last and final appeal must be before the throne of his Maker. And what censure or commendation he will find there, no one may say.

The pages of the life of Danny O'Neil are, according to the tenets of man, sullied and smirched. At one time or another, he violated all of the common ordinances that are built as a fence around us. He recklessly shouldered aside the better restraining influences and wallowed in the dregs of life.

Danny O'Neil was not a young man any more, and that was the pity of it. He had drifted through the sag of things and was struggling on that last, long upgrade this side of the Great Beyond.

Danny had reached the mile post at which the world is pleased to consider a man well past his prime. Fifty. Not old. And not young. To the man who is firmly established in his trade, profession or business, fifty holds no particular tragedy, other than that of precious years charged off on the debit side of life.

There is the autumn at fifty. The harvest time. A man begins to reap that which he has sown, and he finds therein a yield sufficient unto his needs —or nothing. There is no middle ground. You win or lose. Make no mistake about that.

Danny O'Neil had been an engineer on a solid old New England road, back there in the past. In the high lights of his memory were such haunting scenes as the wreck at Baker Bridge, and

the night that No. 2 hit the engine of the local on the cross-over at Fitchburg. Roy Rines had slipped over the Divide that night.

At times, other memories marched in review. Faces that glowed in the fires of hobo jungles. Bob Romans and Charley Warren and old Cal Bailey and Pearl Downey. Buzzell and Coleman and Morgan. The old pay car that came through on Thursday, and Ellis, the paymaster, keen-eyed and never forgetting a name or a face of the hundreds that came trooping in

Old Acey Thayer, too. Old Acey was gone, he had heard. And Todd—blunt, rough-spoken, big-hearted Todd, master mechanic. Todd had passed along that way men all must go.

There had been booze in those days when Danny was coming up to regular runs from the spare board. Not coffin varnish, but the good old reliable stomach-case. The boys had used to drop off at Athol and boot over to the old Athol House or the saloon at the corner of Exchange Street for a ball to help them over Royalston Hill.

And at Irving—the little old saloon across from the depot where the head shack toasted his shins and soothed his hectic life with Three-Star, while the fireman filled the tank at the plug and shoveled over coal.

There had been Sammy Hayward, too. Sammy hated a red board worse than a pup hates cats. He would shut his eyes tight the instant the fireman or shack yelled, "Red on the block! Red eye!" To which Sammy would shout, "I can't see any red block!" and make a bluff at dragging the throttle out a couple of notches more.

Rule G had been winked at a good bit in those days. There came a gradual tightening down, however. The brass collars were becoming more strict all of the time. Booze and steam didn't mix. An entire freight crew were ordered on the carpet finally, and peremptorily canned for good and all, because they had not turned in one of their number admittedly a little the worse for wear.

Danny went about that time. It had to come. He had a good job and seniority enough so that he could always bump on to any run he chose when he got set back summers. He liked the old road—but he liked booze better

There couldn't be any middle ground. It was railroading or whisky.

And Danny O'Neil, with no hesitation whatever, made his choice. Booze had him. He realized that when it was too late. He had always told himself he could quit—if he wanted to. He signed for his last pay in the old North Station and walked out onto Canal Street, Boston, a free man.

Free—except for John Barleycorn, the greatest kidder of them all.

It wasn't hard for a rugged fellow like Danny to get a job on other roads The bars were not up then as they are now. They didn't scrutinize your past history very closely, or ask *why* you left your last job. A boomer was lord of all he surveyed, and that be it understood, was plenty.

Danny got a job firing for the B. & A. for a little while; then he moved on. He hit the Central; the Bessemer; the B. & O. And in time, the Chicago-Northwestern and the Milwaukee. Then the Oregon Short Line and the Denver and Rio Grande. The Southern Pacific and the Santy Fe.

Now he was a stinger and now a tallowpot. He held down a place on the hogheads' spare board occasionally in the Southwest when the fruit trains were pounding east. All a fellow had to have was a time table and a watch.

A boomer could get on all right if he knew how to bat 'em over the road. It was good, too, to climb up there on the right side of the cab again—master of a grimy old freight hog.

Came a time when the realization broke on Danny O'Neil that he wasn't getting marked up quite as often as he used to. Every job he got came a little harder, and was a little farther down the scale of things. He was slipping. Sinking lower.

Several times he made feeble attempts to check that grim, relentless retreat, but it was no use. It is far simpler to check a bowlder during its first lazy forward impulses than after it is well down the mountainside.

Danny had been a "white-liner" before Volstead, which, in the argot of the underworld, means that he was an alcohol drinker. In those days it was reckoned that a man was very low when he would resort to drinking alky. Now it is an art.

Danny O'Neil experienced all of the agonies of the damned during his transition from a boomer railroad man to a bum. He knew in his heart that he was fighting a losing battle, but he would not for a moment admit it. He'd cut out the moonshine and get going one of these days. To-morrow! But to-morrow never came. There lies the tragedy of it all. After the sunset of to-morrow is eternal night. Oblivion!

Like the larva of a worm, Danny passed through certain definite stages of trampdom

Bundle stiff, hobo, tramp, moocher—bum! The first *will* work; the second *won't* work; the third, not if he can humanly avoid it, and the fourth, the bird who mooches the main stem, works the *other* guy. And the bum.

The bum couldn't work, even if the temptation to do so should ever overpower him; and no one would lure him anyway. He is, usually, a physical wreck, a shambling, sullen hulk—dirty, stinking and lousy.

And the night that No. 1 came sweeping majestically down past Squaw Man, past Bandit Bend, every minute precious as a jewel, to find a red board staring at her from above the bleak and forsaken telegraph office at Wild Horse Siding, that night found Danny O'Neil a haunting shadow of the man he might have been, cringing on the last frontier of human souls.

III

Wild Horse Siding is a little less than nothing at all, taken from the viewpoint of the disinterested observer. A pin-prick on the map, a dismal speck on the high desert country of the Navajo. Its sole excuse for existence at all is the fact that it is another added mite of sand that goes to make up the mountain. The mountain in this case being the great Pacific Coast and Transcontinental Railroad System.

Until the P. C. & T. tamed the desert with steel, shackling it to civilization, Wild Horse had been a water hole in the midst of endless vistas of red hills and raw plains. Cattle drank there, and desert travelers. Fuzz-tails came galloping up at night to cool their noses, hot from a twenty or thirty mile trek

Came the iron horse, snorting and fuming into the tranquil scene. This monster brought an insatiable thirst and an empty steel belly. The Transcontinental sank a well, built a pair of towering tanks, installed a pump house and water plug, and laid down a passing track and spur.

First, however, a box car, stripped of its trucks, was dumped beside the tracks there, and a Western Union

lineman hooked up a local circuit. Thereafter, the brass-pounder who craved adventure and solitude was forthwith hustled to Wild Horse. If he remained six months, he generally began talking to himself and had a queer light in his eyes, the same as a sheep herder.

With the passing of time and the development of Arizona's and California's fruit and tourist crop, Wild Horse expanded. A normal, healthy growth taking place; not a boom, you understand. A section boss and a gang of swarthy Mexicans and their respective families took up their domicile there. A frame telegraph office came into being, and was dignified by a coat of red paint. A pump house, tool house and two or three other structures reared their heads beneath the cottonwoods. A straggling picture.

The P. C. & T. was single-tracked between Caliente Junction and Amargosa, division points, and traffic at certain seasons became something of a problem. Being situated at a more or less strategic place, Wild Horse was the natural meeting and passing point for trains, and the Cañon Division found it necessary at last to install a night operator there.

This worthy usually got his "GN" from the dispatcher at midnight; then cut his instruments through the board, cleared the signals and retired, while coyotes yapped their shrill serenades and Wild Horse consigned itself to the mercies of the low, brilliant western stars.

A word here anent the geography of the desert that held Wild Horse in its palm. It is a land of high mesas and deep cañons, a desert range for sheep. The hand of civilization has not touched that untamed land to the north and south of the Cañon Division's right-of-way, except as it has smoothed somewhat the ruts of an old road.

An occasional abandoned stone cabin, the little peaked tents of the sheep herders and once in a while an Indian habitation of mud and sticks leave their far-separated imprints of man. That is all.

A highway, more and more falling into disuse as travelers seek the newer graded link to the south, laces its adventuresome yellow path through the cañons and across the high plains of the Red Desert. It dips over the black lava crest of Loma Prieta, skirts the benches of the Bacobi Plains and comes crawling up from the great Chuska Wash to touch at Wild Horse. It then draws away from the shining steel ribbons of the P. C. & T. to plunge into the Cañon of Shadows.

Once this highway leaves Wild Horse, it does not again come in contact with the railroad until it winds down from the Mesa of the Dead Indian and enters San Marcos

San Marcos is a drowsy little city that mothers all of the desert wastes that surround it. It is some thirty-five tough desert miles west of Wild Horse by the road referred to, while the distance between these two points, as measured in rail-lengths, is exactly twenty-four miles.

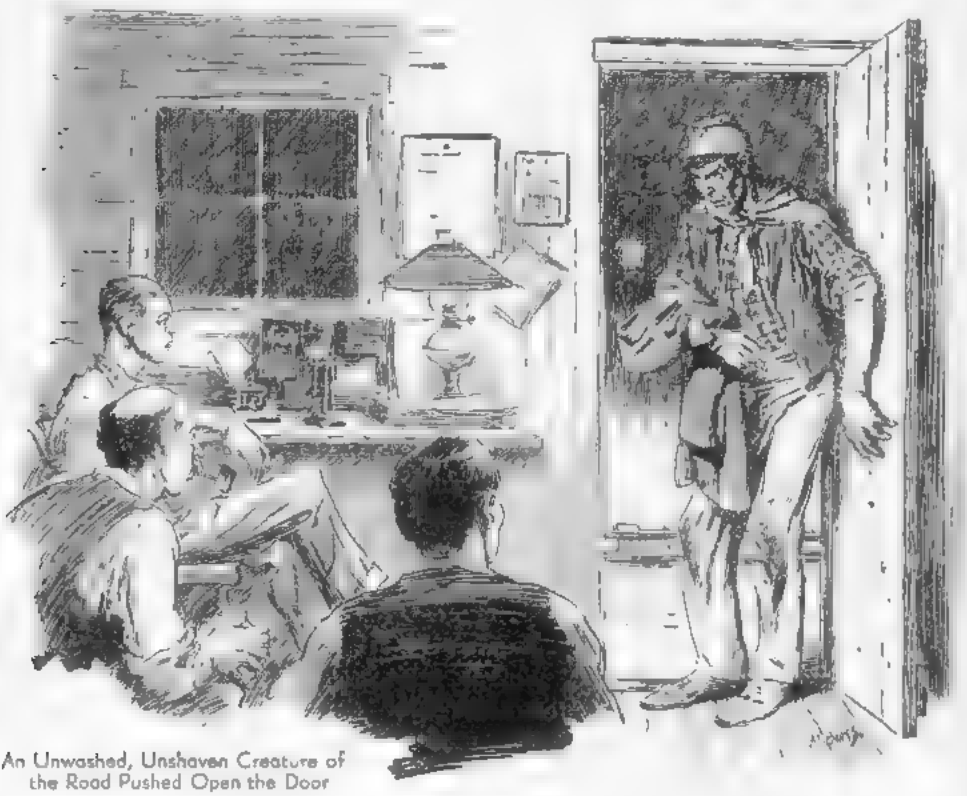
And there was written here to-night, on this twenty-four mile stretch of iron, a story that will be recounted as long as the Cañon Division will live. The story of a battle without quarter, a vicious, deadly encounter as waged between steam and steel and a gaunt, unkempt human derelict—and killer bandits and their snarling, flame-spitting guns.

A silvered desert the setting; the scene opening at Wild Horse, and the actors moving through the half-light—

here faces lighted by the glow of a smoky lamp, and there furtive shapes, faces masked.

And No. 1, the Indian, and her train-load of passengers.

One actor remains unseen, but his fingers are on the pulse of things, his hand at the key that directs the universe, the Master Dispatcher at the end of the Division—the God of High Iron.



An Unwashed, Unshaven Creature of the Road Pushed Open the Door

Three men sat in the dim-lit telegraph office at Wild Horse, smoking. The operator, the pump man, and the section boss. The soft voice of the relay and the harsher tongue of the sounder came from the instruments on the table. There was a sudden burst of dots and dashes, to which the operator listened for a moment. Then he said:

"Wagon Tire reporting No. 1." He glanced at the clock. "Twenty-four minutes late. They'll make up about ten minutes before she gets here."

The youth, a sallow-faced youngster, yawned. He was extremely bored with it all. Only the fact that he had a bum lung kept him here the second day.

The desultory conversation that was carried on by the occupants of the room was at last interrupted by a step outside. A moment later the door was pushed open, and framed there was an unwashed, unshaved creature of the open road, a bum. Caked blood on his cheek added to his forbidding appearance. In his eyes—eyes that had come to look on all men with mistrust, lest he receive a curse in accompaniment to the command to beat it—was a kind of mute appeal, tinged with a sullen glimmer that smoldered in their depths.

"Come on, beat it out of here, you!" snarled the operator, making a threatening movement with his hand. "Get going!"

The pump man, however, waved the telegrapher aside. He had been in the desert a long time, and beneath his rough exterior was a certain understanding.

"What's the trouble, bo?" he demanded. "Get ditched?"

The other nodded. "The con of that extra west that got water here a couple hours ago spotted me under some machinery on a flat, but he waited to boot me off until they got rolling. I been dragging back here by degrees. A feller can't do much on a empty stomach, and with a crack on the head besides I'm pretty near done up."

"Too bad you didn't break your damn neck!" The operator was from a city, and there were laws of the desert that he had not yet learned. He felt that, in his capacity as night man at Wild Horse, it behooved him to show his authority.

"I'd like a drink of water," said the man on the threshold. He paused then, his mouth quivering a little. "God, I'm hungry, too!"

"There's a faucet down at the water tanks," the operator jerked out in a waspish voice. "That's where all the bums drink."

The section boss looked at the battered hulk sharply; then he got up. "You sit down there," he directed gruffly, indicating the chair he had vacated. "My old woman has got some cold meat over to the house. I'll see what we can knock together."

"Go get him a drink, kid." There was a quality in the pump man's voice that was not to be denied. He cast a scowling glance at the telegrapher. "Don't refuse to help any man that's in trouble in the desert." He turned to the newcomer. "I got some beans over in the shack, an' I'm gettin' sick of the damn things. Cook 'em 'cause they're easy to knock together. Glad to have 'em eaten up. Guess a bottle of beer wouldn't go bad either, hey? You sure look tough."

Fifteen minutes later the wayfarer had finished wolfing the food that had been placed before him, there in the dingy little telegraph office. He uttered a long sigh, the sigh of a man who has eaten his fill, and wiped the crumbs from his mouth with the back of a grimy paw. A few still adhered to his stubbly beard, and there were streaks on his chin that plainly indicated slobbered beer.

The pump man held out a cigarette. The other accepted it gratefully, a new warmth in his dull eyes.

"Thanks, buddy."

The spasmodic chatter of the telegraph instruments punctuated the silence that followed. The ragged wanderer inhaled deeply of his smoke and stared out into the desert night, suddenly lost in deep reflection. The others watched him curiously.

At last the unkempt stranger said, the words coming in a muttered halftone: "I was a railroad man—once." It might have been a confession, though the statement was palpably put forth in a forlorn attempt to elevate himself, to lessen, by even a little, the vast gulf that stretched between him and these men before whom he sat in judgment.

"Track walker?" suggested the operator with a sneer.

"Hoghead," corrected the other.

The section boss sucked at his pipe, apparently revolving the thing in his mind. At length he asked:

"Was it a wreck or booze?"

"Booze."

"Rum has set a heap of men on the ties," the pump man admitted, his eyes on the floor. Somehow, he felt that there was stark tragedy here. It was pretty hard to imagine one of that high type of men who sit in locomotive cabs down as far as this.

"I—I used to think I could get going again—but I don't any more. I'm all done. I'll never climb into the cab of an engine again." The man who was as Ishmael shrugged his shoulders and tried to laugh off the statement, but the attempt was rewarded by only a twisted little grimace. "The milestones are stepping stones when you're coming along up, but they're just gravestones after a while."

"Where did you railroad?" the section boss inquired.

"Oh, back in New England," was the reply, "until I ran the Rule-G board a few times. I was all over after that. Boomer. Then pick and shovel. Now I count ties days and dream of hell nights."

"What's your name?" The pump man didn't raise his eyes. He was toying with a cigarette.

"O'Neil. Danny O'Neil."

"First damned time I ever saw an Irishman who would admit he was licked," growled the section boss. "You lost your nerve, all right."

"When they go rumdum," put in the operator, "they lose everything they got."

Somewhere in the night outside the lights of a car flashed. The Morse man got to his feet and stood watching out of a side window. A machine was tipping over the crest where the road crawled up the steep-sided Chuska Wash. It swerved in toward the straggling group of buildings beyond the water tanks, and stopped a short distance from the telegraph office.

"Probably want to buy some gas," crabbed the section boss, joining the Morse man at the window, "or get a porterhouse steak and cream pie. Them blasted tourists make me sick, always after something. The last one wanted to know if we had a whatsis for a nineteen-twelve Ford."

"Water prob'ly," was the pump man's guess.

Five figures got out of the car. They stood for a little talking in low tones, and then moved toward the telegraph office. They wore slouch hats, and kept their heads lowered, thus sheltering their faces.

The section boss stood on the platform, watching. Suddenly he turned to the pump man, now framed in the doorway beyond.

"I don't like the looks of this, Charley."

The other stared at the approaching strangers. "By dodfrey, they got on masks!" he gasped hoarsely.

The section boss moved backward a step and spoke in a low tone over his shoulder.

"Got that signal green from No. 1?"

The operator nodded dumbly.

The occupants of the car were, so far as the moonlight allowed the watchers to make out, youths. There was that about them that seemed to indicate this. Slender, quick and alert of movement; bold. Their hands were deep-thrust in the pockets of loose coats. One, slightly taller than his companions, moved into the lead.

As he reached the platform, his hands flashed out and forward — "filled." Two black automatics menaced the men by the door, and a voice cracked menacingly:

"Stick 'em up!"

The operator thought of the shiny little revolver in the drawer of the tele-

graph table within, his brain floundering through a sudden fog of fear, apprehension. He found himself wondering that it had ever given him any sense of protection. Queer that it had never seemed so utterly useless before.

The burly section boss brought his hands slowly to a point on a level with his shoulders. There was a shotgun over to the house. It was a .410 gauge, single shot. There were some shells somewhere. He had used it now and then to knock over a rabbit. The Mexicans in the long, low structure down the track might, perhaps, boast possession of a few knives and a gun or two, of a sort, but that was all. Wild Horse was not in shape to go to bat in an emergency such as this, the foreman decided, even if they had been forewarned.

"Judas wept!" mumbled the pump man, his eyes widening in surprise "What's the matter?"

"You'll find out if you try to get funny!" a voice snarled threateningly "Just do as we tell you an' it'll be cream puffs; throw your mitt in a fake pass and you'll be cold meat, bo! Get that?"

The pump man felt his head move up and down in an affirmative nod. "All right, boys. All right, now."

"Say, look a here, what do you birds want?" Anger flamed in the breast of the section boss.

The tall bandit ignored him, and spoke to the white-faced operator on the threshold.

"You the guy that tickles the key in this dump? You, in the door."

"Yes."

"The Indian's due in a few minutes, ain't it?"

"She's late."

"How much?"

"About twenty minutes."

"Go in an' set that board red, feller."

The operator obeyed, the panic in his heart reflected in his face.

"They're going to hold up No. 1," he muttered in an undertone, his eyes fixing themselves for an instant on the ragged figure of Danny O'Neil. "Holy cripe, it's a stick-up."

Outside, a second youth had advanced. He came close to the section boss, a gun gripped in his hand, and spoke in a low voice. The quality of his tone was venomous.

"What do you do around here, guy."

"I'm the section boss."

"Well, if you want to keep on being section boss, you keep your jaw shut. See? I'd just as soon bump you off as a cursed pooch. You're a big yap, and I'm going to keep my eye on you personal."

The bandit leader swung into the telegraph office, snarling out an oath of contempt as his eye fell on the frowzy figure there. Danny O'Neil blundered to his feet at sight of the masked intruder, a sudden strange sensation gripping him. For the first time he seemed to sense what the operator had been trying to tell him.

"Train robbers!" He gasped the words in awe.

The bandit struck at him with the flat of his automatic.

"Get out of here, you lousy bum!"

The other cringed away, lurching awkwardly against a chair and stumbling to his hands and knees. As he regained his feet, the gunman thrust him savagely out of the door, adding an ignominious kick. The appearance of the tattered figure provoked a mirthless laugh from one of the gang.

"What'll we do with the bum?"

"Shoot 'im?" snarled a voice.

"Aw, don't waste a bullet. Knock 'im over the head!"

The barrel of a black pistol flailed

toward him, but Danny O'Neil managed to evade it, though in so doing he blundered off the edge of the narrow platform to fall headlong between the rails. The ballast ripped his hands cruelly, and he bruised his leg. His lips framed broken curses that he was without enough breath to voice.

Another of the bandits leaped toward him, as though to follow up the unwarranted attack, but the ragged wayfarer was already retreating across the right-of-way ditch beyond. He was used to kicks and curses now, and because of previous unpleasant experiences he had come to acquire a certain celerity, which he used to good advantage when the need arose.

Like a coyote, that skulker of the sage, Danny O'Neil slunk out of sight, darting from juniper to juniper, blindly, desperately seeking sanctuary in the desert.

IV

That the holdup of No. 1 had been carefully planned was evinced by the businesslike manner in which the bandits went about the matter in hand They smashed the telegraph instruments beyond all hope of repair, and cut away the wires that led in from the pole, thus isolating Wild Horse from the outside world.

In the dispatcher's office at Caliente Junction, the train wire recorded its failure with a single dismal click, as the open circuit released the current in the coils and the armature fell away. The metal tongue of the wire—that thin thread of copper that spanned the desert—was dead.

The man before the train sheet swore, and immediately switched to the second train wire, which was also dead. Quick tests revealed the fact that the wire failure was at Wild Horse. Little, however, was thought of it at the time. Some local trouble that the operator would probably soon clear. In the meantime a new wire was set up.

The youthful renegades moved here and there like furtive shadows. One made a brief survey of the buildings beyond the telegraph office, apparently seeking to discover whether or not there were unduly curious eyes watching them. Another returned to the car, swinging it deeper into the shadows and snapping out the lights.

The slender leader, ransacking the telegraph office, discovered the operator's shiny little thirty-two. With a contemptuous laugh he broke it open, spilling the cartridges over the floor; then exhibited it to his companions.

"Look at the rod! This guy is tough"—eyes leering at the frightened operator. Suddenly his tone changed. "Listen, you stiffs!" He again menaced the men who had been herded into the little station. "We got sweet dope on this lay. Plenty of jack riding the John O'Brien—just pick it off the suckers."

"You must be making some mistake, boys," said the pump man. "No. 1 is an all-Pullman train. There ain't any mail or express cars on it."

"Aw, who the hell is going to bust in on mail and express?" the other flung back. "An' get post office gum shoes an' Pinks an' railroad's fly cops, all of 'em on your tail. This job is hot stuff, with a dead-sure get-away. We're wise to this desert all right, an' we been spotting these swell rattlers for a month. Twelve cars, an' full up. Everybody got a wad. They got to have to ride the high iron. If you ain't got a roll you don't travel in class. See?

"It's real money on this Indian. I'm hep. I been on it. A few old grannies with travelers' checks, but not enough to spoil the sugar. All the suck-

ers keep their boodle on 'em. Nobody ain't leaving anything kicking around loose in their section or drawing room. It's right in their britch kick.

"No bulls to bother us out here. No screaming sirens the minute the front office gets the tip there's been a trick pulled. It's a gent's game, and I know it. Any bloke that tries to toss a fast one gets the bump; that's all. Pin that on your shirt, you hicks." The gang leader moved his automatic menacingly, stabbing it at the section boss, the pump man and the operator, each in turn.

The bandit chief allowed this threat to sink in; then he went on:

"Here's what you yaps do. Just sit around in here smoking, like there ain't anything wrong, so the eagle eye don't get a bum steer all of a sudden and try to take them varnished wheelers away. That little shrimp there"—the speaker indicated one of the gang with a jerk of his head—"gets in the closet and keeps you guys' address in his gat.

"We get the crew as quick as she stops and bunch 'em up here. Three of us own the train, and maybe she won't be clean when we hit the observation."

The pump man glanced at the gnarled old section boss and shook his head, signifying resignation to their helplessness. The operator, his horrified eyes on those black muzzles, found his voice at last.

"We—we don't want any trouble. We'll do as you say."

"Yuh. Thanks," sneered the bandit leader, his fingers readjusting themselves to the contour of the gun butt in his right hand. "Smoke up." He laughed shortly. "Make yourselves right to home."

Slowly the section boss began filling his pipe, his face grim and terrible. The pump man fumbled for his cigarettes.

Four of the bandits withdrew. On the platform, they raised their masks and indulged in cigarettes, their furtive eyes forever haunting the eastern horizon, there where the curving rails dipped into the sag that led past Wild Horse.

Minutes dragged. The very air seemed tinged with a horrible suspense. Insect voices seeped through the stillness. A woman opened the door of a house back some distance from the station. She stood looking out, her form silhouetted against the warm, yellow light beyond. From within floated the strains of an orchestra in Los Angeles. Then the door closed, and with its closing the music died, as the wife of the section boss went back to her sewing and the radio.

Down the track, an old Mexican squatted on the doorstep in the shadows of the long, low building that housed the section gang. Now and again he sucked at a cigarette, which was shielded by a swarthy hand. At last he got slowly to his feet and began moving toward the telegraph office up past the water tanks, a few steps' advance and a few moments' pause in the shadows of the whispering cottonwoods.

He was curious, puzzled, was old Pedro Olvera. He saw strange things here. His calloused fingers probed meditatively in his silver-streaked black hair. He always watched for No. 1, and never failed to find a thrill in her going. He was proud of the Indian, proud because he helped safeguard her flight.

What were these things that he was seeing? What did it mean, those *cinco hombres* who came in *el automóvil* and behaved so strangely. Their voices were harsh and unfriendly. He must look closer, for in the night all sheep were black.

And then, far off to the east, a new note. A distant murmur, rippling through the stillness of the desert night. A white dot appeared, and a silver blade lanced the gloom. Came a rumble that grew with magic swiftness, and the shrill, long-drawn blast of a whistle.

The rails began their song of steel with a plaintive little lullaby, and ended it with a pulse-gripping crash and roar, as No. 1 came hurtling toward Wild Horse.

And out across the tracks a vagabond, dirty, bruised and stripped of almost the last shred of manhood, crouched in the shadow of a juniper and watched the haughty and defiant coming of the Indian, mighty transcontinental train, with its precious human cargo.

Caught in a tide he could not stem, Danny O'Neil, a bit of flotsam on the seas of life, found himself lodged for a little in the background of a scene that unfolded before him with a speed and vividness that stunned him. A grimed paw dug at his eyes and tried to wipe away the picture he saw there—the picture of a big passenger hauler, of people in the club and dining cars, of the dim figures in the cab, of men and women in the sleeping cars, of a red board — and snarling, ruthless looters.

But instead of dispelling the strange illusion, he saw, with clear vision, No. 1, the haughty Indian, crack extra-fare train of the Transcontinental, caught in a red web of outlawry.

V

Big Jim Crocker, his left hand on the handle of the automatic brake valve, leaned out of the cab and scowled down on the little red station at Wild Horse as the heavy engine clanked slowly past the telegraph office to come at last to a reluctant standstill. The fireman crossed the cab and stood watching out of the gangway on the right.

There were figures in the telegraph office. The operator sat stiffly erect in front of the window. He made no move to get up as the train came in. Behind the building itself was a movement. A puzzled frown creased the brow of Big Jim.

Suddenly a man in blue overalls leaped forward into the path of the headlight. Frantically his arms jerked up and down in a go-ahead motion. It was Pedro Olvera, seemingly gone crazy.

Something was wrong, and these strangers meant harm to No. 1. The thought burned deep in the heart of Pedro, the section hand. He did not consider his own danger; his only fear was for the safety of the Indian. He shouted shrilly, brokenly.

"*Ande !*" Go on!" He crossed himself. "*Madre de Dios!*"

Oaths and foul epithets spilled from the tongue of the bandit leader. Another of the gang raced forward, his gun lancing the gloom with murderous fire darts.

Pedro Olvera suddenly went limp. Grimy, gnarled hands clutched spasmodically at the front of his jumper, and he slumped across one of the shining rails to twitch on into the ditch.

Big Crocker stiffened, while his eyes went from the form there beyond the pilot to running figures that leaped from the shadows like wolves.

Somewhere a woman screamed. Voices babbled excitedly. The door of a vestibule opened and a lantern appeared. Hardly able to believe his senses, the engineer glanced back toward the telegraph office. The operator still was at his table, and the section

boss and the pump man sat stiffly near the door. There was another occupant of the room now, Crocker noted in that swift glance, a masked man.

Even as he uttered a startled oath, sharp commands came cracking from those menacing forms on the ground.

"Come down out of there, you two! Quick, or you're going to get cooled the same as that other, stiff!"

Big Jim hesitated, a mad thought flashing in his mind. They were on a slight down grade, and it would take only such a short time to get the train moving again. There might be a chance—

Below the high cab window a pencil-thin tongue of fire punctuated the crack of an automatic, and a bullet fanned the cheek of the big engineer. He gasped, and sidled off the seat-box to follow the fireman down through the gangway.

"Back into the telegraph office!" snarled a voice.

Another gunman uttered a cold-blooded laugh.

"I'm getting cock-eyed! I missed that guy in the cab a foot."

The bandit in the station stepped outside of the door, two sullen pistols gripped in his hands. He watched the approaching figures of the engineer and fireman, his eyes gleaming malevolently above the mask that covered the lower half of his face.

"Inside, there!" he rasped out, jerking one of the muzzles toward the room beyond, "An' don't forget, if anything goes sour somebody is going to get plugged."

A few minutes later the rest of the crew of No. 1 had been forced, at point of gun, to enter the telegraph office The bandits worked quickly. Two remained on guard on the platform, and the slender leader and his companions darted into an open vestibule and turned their attention on the club car.

Two elderly men were enjoying their after-dinner cigars in comfortable chairs near the end of the car. Others were reading or smoking. Suddenly a sharp exclamation of alarm broke from the lips of the colored attendant.

"Ma-a-n, *ma-n!* W-who is dem gemmun?"

One of the two gray-haired passengers glanced up, while his eyes suddenly widened. His body grew taut for an instant; then relaxed, and he smiled.

"What is this, a little joke?"

"Get down for that roll!" came the grim rejoinder. "Quick!"

"Now wait a minute, my friend," remonstrated the second of the venerable travelers, squinting at the three masked intruders quizzically. "Let me understand this. Is this train being held up?"

"You're damned right!" was the vehement reply. "We're going through it like nobody's business! Come on, fork over your dough, you old stiff."

"And what if I refuse?"

The bandit leader uttered a savage oath, and hacked downward at the face of the passenger with his heavy automatic. Blood smeared its awful crimson stain over the white face of the bandit's victim, and he slumped sideways, unconscious. Another of the trio instantly rifled the old man's pockets.

Out in the desert, Danny O'Neil watched the grim bit of play through the window, and a feeling of revulsion gripped him. Such needless cruelty awed him. His eyes went back along the train, going from window to window in quick review. A mother was nursing a baby. An old woman dozed in her seat. A child's face was pressed against the pane, while curious eyes

peered out. Love, repose, confidence—all here.

The brain of the watcher was in a turmoil. A hundred mad thoughts flamed and died. He lived through an eternity, an eternity that could have been measured in pulse beats.

Suddenly, out of it all, one sharply defined idea presented itself. Like a ray of sunlight, snatching at an opening in storm clouds, a wild inspiration thrust aside the shadows and fears that had engulfed him.

Steel breeds steel; iron breeds iron—and rot breeds rot. Locked in the heart of Danny O'Neil was the love he bore this stirring, pulsating game of the rails. Something was there that booze and the gutter had never erased from his soul, smoldering always under his skin. And now, fanned by the breath of stark tragedy, it burst into flame. A tiny little flame that leaped from a puny blaze to a consuming giant.

The hands of the wanderer clenched, and he pulled himself together, a new determination full-born in him. He stumbled over a root, and staggered up with a muttered curse. A branch snatched at the greasy and shapeless hat that had been crammed on his head. He plunged on over crusted hillocks and jagged outcroppings of rock, unmindful of everything save the thing that had been conceived in his mind.

Circling wide, he moved toward the engine at a blundering half-run. Once or twice he pulled up, fighting for breath, while his eyes darted fearfully toward the train. The Pullmans thrust up their bulk between him and the telegraph office, and he felt sure that there was little likelihood of his movements being observed. Without a doubt, the train robbers had not given a second thought to the hapless bum they had disdainfully turned loose.

At last Danny O'Neil reached the right-of-way ditch, and here he stopped that he might pull himself together. His eye went up to the great Mountain passenger hauler that towered above him, while a wild something seemed to grip his heart. A pain prodded at his side, and he gulped breath into his lungs in quivering sobs.

The moon glinted from the sleek boiler and etched the massive drivers and side-rods against the blacker recesses beyond. A slender feather of white purred upward from the dome, and black smoke poured from the squat stack. The whole locomotive strummed and rumbled with hidden power. The pumps hiccupped spasmodically.

It was a living, breathing giant of steam and steel, waiting there for a guiding master hand.

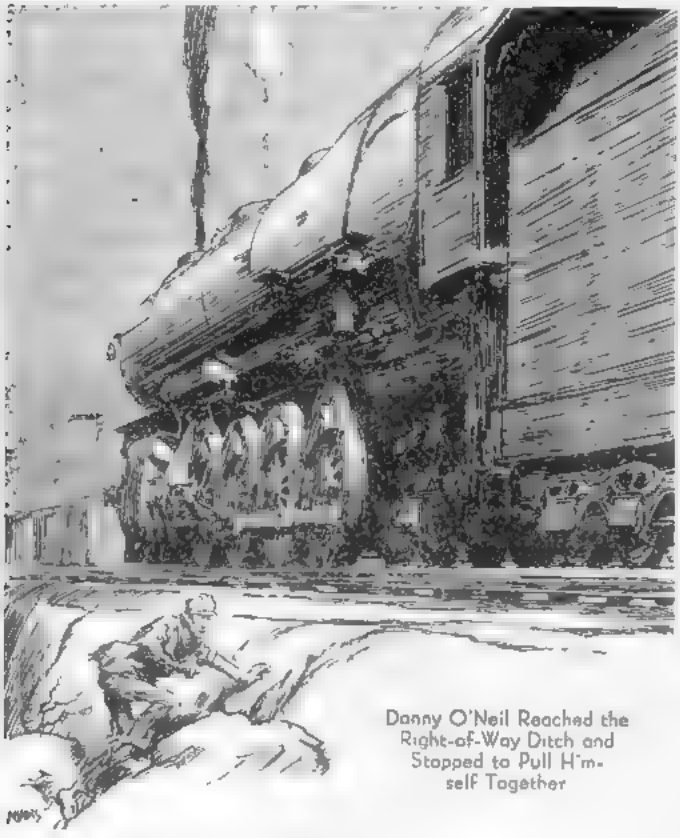
A yellow glow shone along the sides of the ashpan, and now and again bright coals sifted through the grates. In the cab, the gauge lamps cast a white glint in their limited arc; a bit of fireplay danced through the crack between the doors of the fire-box, touching coal-gates, the shovel on the foot plate and the long, pronged hook.

The hand of Danny O'Neil went out, almost reverently, to rest on a side-rod. The familiar smells that filled his nostrils were like perfume; the inward rumblings and mutterings of the iron monster sweet music.

For a long minute he stood there; then he took a deep breath and moved toward the gangway. His hands stretched out for the grab-irons and he dragged himself slowly up the steep steps to the apron. With a little catch in his throat, he swung in past the boiler butt, and for a moment remained quiet in the shadows in front of the seat-box.

His eyes darted to every familiar

cock and lever—to the lubricator, high up over the boiler butt, to the steam gauge, bathed by the glow of the light before it, to the water glass. In swift parade, too, he found his hands going to the long, slender throttle lever, to the brass handles of the brake equipment—automatic and independent—to the injector, to the reverse.



Danny O'Neil Reached the Right-of-Way Ditch and Stopped to Pull Himself Together

The latter was notched on dead center, for half mechanically, the last thing Big Jim Crocker had done was to bring it back to this position. Danny gripped the bar and released the latch, and eased it down into the forward corner. Next he opened the sander valves

Then he paused. His lips tightened grimly, and he fought to control the quivering hulk that housed his soul. For the first time in longer than he could remember, Danny O'Neil, hovering over the brake equipment, there in the cab of the 3692, muttered a strange broken prayer.

"God—!" His tongue licked at his dry lips feverishly. "God — of — of High Iron—help me to highball 'er to San Marcos. Give me the breaks—"

He paused. It was all a gamble—like life. If! What a sick little word to so control human destiny.

If luck smiled and the bandits on the train didn't pull the air. There was a chance that they might not be familiar with the operation of the conductor's valve. It was a long shot; birds like that were pretty wise. If they didn't go through the train setting the hand brakes. If the locked door of the baggage car, there behind the tender, delayed them long enough.

There was a chance, too, that the sudden starting of the train might cause the bandits to get off hurriedly, to pile out of a vestibule and try to reach the engine before it had gained headway.

However, no matter what happened, the attention of the train robbers would be taken for a time from the looting of the passengers. The operator at Wild Horse might get a chance to notify San Marcos, or Wagon Tire, and help could be rushed to the scene. If he succeeded in only taking No. 1 a couple of miles

away from the station and into the desert before they got the Indian stopped, it would, perhaps, defeat their purpose. For, once they were cut off from the highway at Wild Horse, escape for them was out of the question.

No thought was in the mind of Danny O'Neil of his own danger. It just didn't matter. He had long passed the stage where anything mattered—for him. He was sick and sore, mentally and physically, and a bullet from a bandit's gun was, after all, only another means to the same end.

He uttered a little cackling laugh that was without mirth. Then his body grew tense. His fingers closed about the handle of the ET equipment. Then:

"Let's go—bum!"

The brake handle went to full release—and then back to running position. The air went off, and the brake shoes fell slowly away from the wheels. With his heart pounding madly at his ribs, Danny O'Neil waited for what seemed an interminable interval; then he snatched at the throttle and dragged it back.

For just a moment there was silence, the big engine easing ahead almost imperceptibly. And then a deafening roar crashed from the stack. The drivers spun savagely, caught the rail, and raced again, only to at last grip the sanded steel beneath them and surge ahead with mighty power.

The slack went out and the train began slipping past the dingy little station. The tattered figure in the cab nursed the throttle back, his eyes peering down at the desert floor that was already slipping away.

He'd got 'em rolling! He'd got 'em rolling!

And they'd called him a lousy bum—and kicked him. He wa'n't worth wasting a bullet on, was he? He'd show 'em! Just knock him on the head, hey? Run 'im off like he was a worthless cur. Thought there wa'n't anything to fear from a stinking weary willie. Maybe they wouldn't change their tune now.

Danny O'Neil lurched to the deck and caught up the scoop. He moved to the gangway and looked back. Shouts reached his ears, and he could see madly running figures dashing along beside the moving train toward the engine.

"That's right!" he snarled. "Come on! Make the grab irons—and I'll beat your brains out!" His fingers tightened about the handle of the No. 3 scoop.

A fierce exultation swept over the ragged man in the cab. His veins flamed with a strange elixir. He was drunk with the power that fate had placed in his hands. The dream of the last years of his sordid existence had come true. He was railroading again. He was back in the cab of a fighting, straining, thundering locomotive. Once more he was a railroad man!

He, Danny O'Neil, booze-fighter, wretched vagabond, had been given his chance, and he was going through—all the way.

VI

As the brakes went off on No. 1, startled oaths broke from the lips of the two bandits who stood guard over the crew in the telegraph office. Something was wrong. Somebody had eluded their watchful eyes and had slipped into the cab.

The shorter of the pair took a quick step or two along the platform; then hesitated uncertainly, his eyes jerking toward the club car, where the bandit leader and his two companions were engaged in their ruthless looting of the passengers. He was suddenly assailed by doubt. Possibly the unknown indi-

vidual who had succeeded in getting into the cab was armed, and in a gun duel this person, protected by the steel sides of the cab, would have all of the best of it.

The stick-up could wait until this new menace had been summarily dealt with. The bandit uttered a cry of warning, intended for the ears of the masked men on the train. It was in that instant that the squat stack of the locomotive ahead belched a mottled cloud of smoke, while the reverberating roar that accompanied it shocked from the desert fastness a storm of echoes.

And then, with the suddenness of a bolt from a clear sky, the train robbers' house of cards came toppling down about their ears. Desperately they sought to check the tottering fabric of outlawry, frantically battling to neutralize the unknown agency that was exerting its forces to thwart them.

The first of the pair on the platform to interpret the significance of those releasing brakes now bent his energy toward reaching the cab before the train had gained momentum. His companion, baffled by a thing that he was at a loss to understand, forgot for the moment the men held in the telegraph office as he swung toward the Pullmans that loomed beyond.

The pump man uttered a hoarse and jubilant shout:

"The bum's got the train!"

The clouded, sullen face of the section boss lighted.

"Good for his ragged soul!"

"Are we going to cow here and let 'im do it all?" cried the pump man. "He's going to try and take No. 1 to San Marcos—alone. They'll pull the air, or go over the tender. They'll kill him anyway." The section boss lunged for the door.

"Come on!" he cried snarlingly. "They can't more'n plug us."

The pump man, however, thrust the other roughly to one side. "You got a woman, you damn fool!" he boomed, and lunged from the room, first of those crowded in the little telegraph office to face the flame-lit muzzles of the outlaws' guns.

The bandit, his back turned, as he flung a startled gaze up and down the train, now being jolted forward, jerked himself around and fired. He was off balance, and the bullet went wide of its target, to flick a neat little hole in the side of the station. The second shot, following the first with split-second rapidity, was closer. The deadly bit of lead snatched viciously at the pump man's flapping coat.

Before the train robber could pull himself up and get set to blaze again at the charging figure, his heel snagged the upraised end of a loose plank and only by a desperate effort did he keep himself from falling. He lurched sidewise in an attempt to escape his foremost antagonist, but the lanky pump man was all over him with the ferocity of a wounded tiger.

The yellow patch of light from the open door supplied partial illumination for the brief battle that threatened to spill the antagonists under the wheels.

A fist snapped upward and found the bandit's jaw. In that instant the pump man tore one of the robber's pistols from his grip, and leaped away toward an open vestibule that was sliding by. Big Jim Crocker pounced on the second weapon as it fell clattering to the platform; then flung his bulk after the pump man

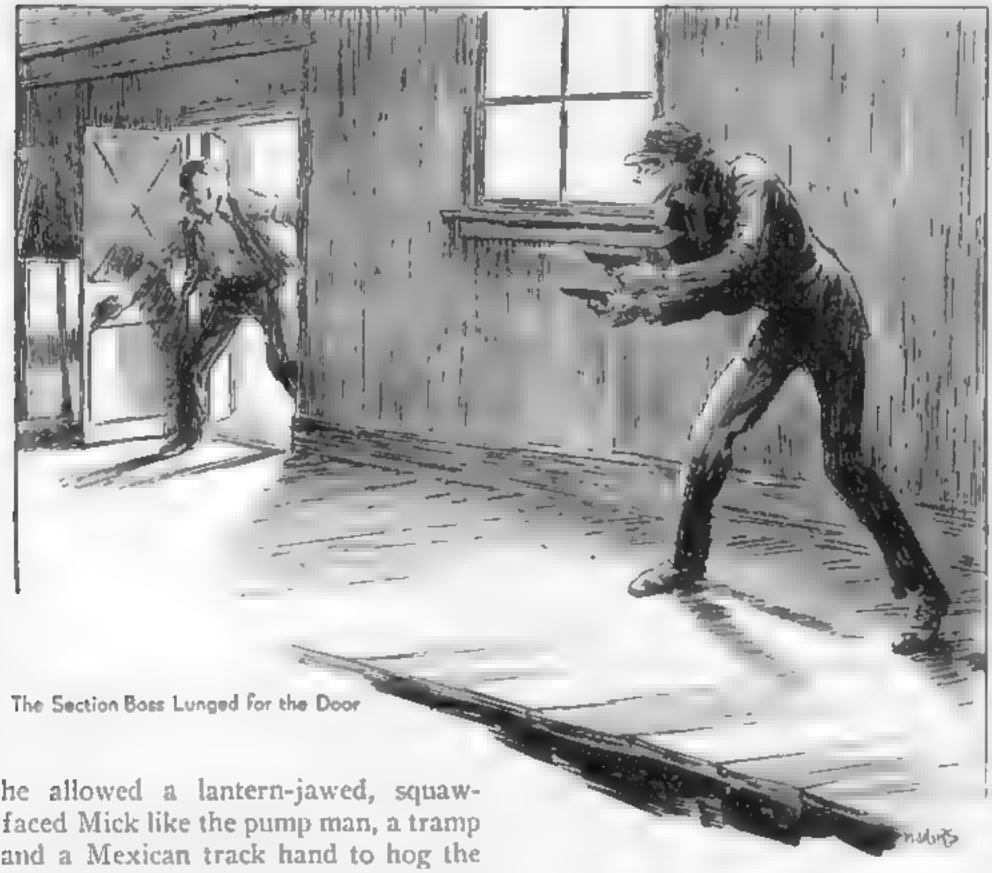
The section boss thrust the fireman aside and, with the burly rear brakeman of No. 1, managed to hurl himself into the only remaining open ves-

tibule. He felt that the salvaging of the Indian was his own immediate business.

And never let it be said of him that he allowed a lantern-jawed, squaw-faced Mick like the pump man, a tramp and a Mexican track hand to hog the show the only time Wild Horse ever had shot its star above the horizon of the Red Desert—and probably the only time it ever would.

The train was gaining headway with amazing rapidity, the quick, heavy bark of the exhaust punctuating its going with decisive bursts that shot its smoke plume high into the heavens.

The running bandit flung one of the two guns that he had clutched into the night, that he might have a hand free to seize the grab-iron. Urged on by the thought that a carefully planned holdup was suddenly being wiped off the boards by an unforeseen twist of fate, the train robber made a last desperate effort and flung himself at the step, the fingers of his right hand gripping the curving pipe rail that dipped downward under the cab.



The Section Boss Lunged for the Door

High on the deck above him loomed a menacing form, and a coal scoop prodded at his face savagely. He managed to elude it, while the gun in his left hand ranged upward, its ugly muzzle vomiting fire.

Danny O'Neil felt a strange shock, a blow that turned him halfway around. He gasped and staggered against the coal gates. Queer what had got him. He couldn't be shot, because he didn't remember hearing a re-

port. There had been a little lisping tongue of fire—that was all.

He shook his head and pushed himself onto the apron and toward the gangway. There was another winking yellow spurt, and a hot something drew its searing finger along his cheek. So. He hadn't split that bird's skull after all. Well, he'd try it this way. He kicked loose coal out of the gangway, and it fell in a blinding cloud in the face of the outlaw. The latter, cursing savagely, crooked his arm over his eyes.

Danny O'Neil peered down, one hand steadying himself and the other balancing the scoop. Then he began pounding methodically at the figure below. Once or twice the scoop missed, to ring sharply against the sides of cab or tender. Again there was only a muffled thud! Thud! Thud!

At last the man down on the step slipped quietly from sight, while Danny O'Neil continued, for a little, to beat at the place where that dim outline had been. Panting, gasping, he reeled back across the apron finally, to sway uncertainly, his feet widespread, between the coal gates and fire doors.

The note of the exhaust finally penetrated the fog of his brain, and he lurched up past the seat-box to adjust the reverse lever. Slowly he latched it higher on the quadrant, while the tone of the coughing stack changed. It was softer, quicker now.

The train had not yet reached the foot of the sag, and its speed was increasing with breath-taking rapidity.

Danny O'Neil sank back on the seat-box and closed his eyes. He felt funny as hell! He was tired, had an all-gone feeling—and was contented to have it that way. He was warm, too, and his shirt seemed to be sort of wet, sticky. His tongue licked at his dry lips, and his head rolled slightly to one side. The cold night air of the desert whipped into his face, reviving, refreshing him.

Mechanically his eye went at last to the white face of the steam gauge. The needle was on the pin. Next he peered at the water glass. Less than half a gauge there. Better put some in before they hit the short grade at Mad Mountain. He started the injector.

How natural it all seemed again, and he hadn't been in the cab of a passenger engine for years. It was as though it was but yesterday, while the days and nights of the hobo jungle were like a dream. A man adjusted himself to his surroundings so quickly. Queer, this destiny. He had always felt, somehow, that he was due to sit on the right side of an engine cab once more. His ears tuned themselves to the sounds that filled the air.

The crash of the drivers, the staccato roar of the exhaust, the whine of steam at the dome, the hum of the "gun," the clatter of the trucks, the rattle of the apron—songs of the rail. It was the sweetest music Danny O'Neil had ever heard.

Next his brain picked up the thread of events in connection with the hold-up, and his eyes went back into the gloom above the tender. He thought they'd get the air on him before this. They would be coming through the baggage car soon now, and climbing up over the tank. If he saw that they were going to get him, he'd close the throttle and set the brakes—wipe the gauge clean—and the bandits might not be able to handle the train themselves

Anyway, the operator at Wild Horse would have a chance to wire Wagon Tire for help, and it wouldn't take long for them to start a light engine with officers aboard.

Danny O'Neil got to the deck and found the fireman's canteen. He was terribly thirsty. He felt all right, except for something burning in his side.

No. 1 was through the sag now, and beginning to feel the drag of the Mad Mountain grade. There was a three-mile pull here—some one-and-a-quarter per cent—but once trains beating west were over the hump it was a long, gradual descent to San Marcos. It was fast iron in from Mad Mountain.

Danny O'Neil knew the road, knew it as only a man could who had, in his periodic migrations, counted off the ties—one, two and a long step—snagged the gunnels and flattened himself on the decks of its trains. He had learned it well, studied it from every angle but the cab and the plush.

"I got to put in a fire," he mumbled to himself, gulping another drink from the canteen. "I got to—or we ain't going to make the hill."

He sloshed water over his head and face; then propped his back against a corner of the cab, his legs straddled far apart. His left foot pressed the pedal of the air doors and they shot back with a hiss. He stooped for coal, and found a savage pain stabbing at his side.

Four times the gaunt, grimed and bloody figure on the reeling deck aimed his laden scoop at the opening of the roaring fire-box without success. Twice his foot slipped from the pedal, as he fought to maintain his balance, while the shovel smashed against the outside of the heavy doors, and twice the scoop belted the edge of the door-ring, spilling the precious black diamonds in all directions.

"To hell with ya!" he gritted. And closed the valve that controlled the automatic action; then dragged the doors open by hand.

Once, twice, three times he shot coal at the white-hot pit, every scoopful the reward of torture. A morbid depression assailed him, and with it came an awful nausea. A black void yawned before him. Stubbornly he fought to keep from toppling into a star-filled abyss. His knees buckled, and he wilted in the coal that had cascaded to the foot-plate.

Here he battled through a crisis. He found the canteen again, and drank. There was a returning flash of strength, and his brain cleared. He climbed to his feet. He was getting to be a regular old woman. Why, he was all right—except for his side; that felt funny.

Stubbornly he went back to his task of shooting in coal.

Small scoopfuls, that was the ticket. Spread it on thin. He'd keep 'er hot. The scoop rang from the door-ring for a little, being handled with that deft artistry only acquired with long practice. The black on white—the tallowpot's rule of thumb. He'd got to bat 'er over the hump; those birds would be scrambling over the tender pretty quick, raising hell.

Good thing he got that handout in the telegraph office back at Wild Horse. He couldn't have fired the hog on an empty stomach. White men, the pump man and the section boss. God's own. They didn't shove him out a lump, but reg'lar set-down.

After an interminable interval, after torturing minutes when a man had never been nearer out cold on his feet, there was a gradual quickening of the pulse of the 3692. A queer, bloody little smile twisted the gray features of Danny O'Neil. His lips moved tonelessly.

They were past Mad Mountain!

The scoop fell to the deck with a

clatter, and Danny O'Neil swayed toward the seat-box on the right. It was good to sit down! His arms dangled at his side, his head lolled forward. After a little he roused up to peer at the steam gauge, but it was only a white blur, while the water glass eluded him entirely. Fumbling fingers, however, found the try cocks, and he satisfied himself that there was water enough.

He then hooked up the reverse lever, the instinct being to latch it a little higher now. He eased the throttle in a little, and sank back.

He was utterly soul-weary. Tired! He—he just wanted to sleep, bury himself in slumber. His left hand went out and found the yellow-glinting handle of the brake equipment. He'd wash 'er out—if he had to. The big hole, and they could have her.

But cool torrents bathed him, the lash of whipping air urged him on, fanned to life for a little a dying ember. For, let it be known, Danny O'Neil was riding home to Glory, there in the cab of No. 1.

VII

BEFORE the echoes of the bandits' guns had at last found a final resting place in the red hills, Wild Horse was flaming with excitement. There were shouts and frantic Mexican interrogations. Shadowy figures darted here and there, largely moving in the direction of the telegraph office.

A woman appeared, half running. From a home, there down the track, her sister of darker skin was calling:

"Pedro! Pedro! *Donde viena V?* Where are you?"

The day operator had been dozing over a book. He flung himself toward the station, still half drugged with sleep. A trainman was picking himself out of the ditch, where he had been flung as he tried desperately to grab the railing of the observation platform as it hurtled past.

The Pullman conductor and the baggageman had collared the bandit on the platform, and were calling for a piece of rope or wire. An awed, hushed group were gathering about the body of Pedro Olvera. Farther on, well down past the spot where the switch lamp glimmered at the west end of the passing track, a train robber was stretched beside the tie-ends.

A very nicely arranged holdup had all of the earmarks of being kicked into the middle of next week. Outlaw breed, snarling dude bandits, had met the breed of the rails, to their everlasting sorrow.

The night operator feverishly searched forth an old portable telegraph set from a closet, together with a wrecking clamp. Five minutes later, assisted by the day man, he had climbed the pole outside of the station. He made no attempt to piece up the dead train wires, but, with utter disregard for everything but the matter at hand, cut in on a Western Union trunk line.

The repeater chief at Amargosa cursed loudly, but listened, his ear close to a new note in the order of things. In a flash he understood, and made a connection with the circuit now being used as a train wire on the Cañon Division.

The metallic tongue of the high resistance main line set began its spasmodic clatter as the operator burned up the wire. In the brief idiom of his clan, he apprised the dispatcher of the attempted train robbery. He elaborated, furthermore, on the fact that No. 1 was headed for San Marcos, minus the larger number of her crew, but with a full-fledged hoghead at the throttle, the latter masquerading as a tramp.

Also, the breathless operator flashed the information that three train robbers were aboard the Indian when it departed from Wild Horse, not to omit a bull-mad pump man, section boss and a temporarily deposed engineer by the name of Jim Crocker.

"Better get set for them," the night man rapped out. "Rouse out all the bulls you got. If somebody don't get the air that hot shot's going through. An Irishman by the name of O'Neil has got the yavvy."

On board the Indian, the slender-waisted leader of the mob snarled a curse as the slack went out with a bang Somewhere there was a slip-up. They'd overlooked a bet. For a moment there was an impulse to rush for the vestibule, but he thought better of it as the quick, forward impulse of the train brought the realization that No. 1 was highballing out right now.

If they got to the platform they would only be left flat. It was a swell racket, and there was plenty of sugar, as witnessed by the nice wad that had been snatched from less than half of the occupants of the club car. Everybody seemed rotten with money; and there were the cash boxes in the two diners, and the suckers back in the sleepers.

"Them two fools let somebody get away from 'em!" cried the bandit leader. "We got to take that guy on the engine quick!"

"Where's the conductor's valve?" cracked another of the bandits, his eyes darting up and down the car.

"Never mind pulling the air," the leader snarled. "We'll go through the baggage car and climb over the tender. Soon as we burn down the pig-eye that's got 'er, we can finish this job right out where it's nice and quiet and there's plenty of room."

"Make it fast," the third train robber put in. "We don't want to get too far from this dump." He glanced out a little nervously at the dark outlines of low buildings that were slipping by. He swore fitfully as he hurried toward the baggage car.

"Get a sledge out of one of them emergency boxes," commanded the gang leader. "The door of the baggage next to the engine will probably be locked."

The bandits crossed the vestibule at the head end of the club car at a run. A vague something, a sudden surging premonition of danger, flamed in the breast of first one and then another. It was contagious, and in spite of themselves was transmitted from one to the other.

The key of the whole affair was Wild Horse. From here their getaway would start, and they had congratulated themselves on a cleverly devised plan to elude pursuit and subsequent detection. It mattered little to them that the car they used was stolen, nor that eventually suspicion must fall on innocent youths in Wagon Tire. Everything had been arranged with consummate cunning, every detail rehearsed until it was all letter perfect. There wasn't a chance for detection, unless—

A speedy dash down the winding highway; a pause at Aguajito that the car might be recognized, and then a sly bit of deception, wherein the sedan they had used would be abandoned on a dark side street in Wagon Tire, leaving them free to board a west-bound train on which they had already made reservations.

And with everything clicking, moving with the precision of clockwork, there had been a sudden and mysterious slip. Not that it mattered so much, but when the breaks started going against

a lay it was time to fade the mark and get ready to lam.

As he pulled up before the door that blocked further progress toward the engine, the leader flung out reassuringly:

"If we got to take that guy right"—he jerked his head toward the locomotive that was now working steam with an explosive exhaust—"I can back the rattler to the siding. I fired a hog a few weeks once, before I found an easier way to shake down the coin. We got to put this engine on the ground with the derail so they can't run for San Marcos."

The third member of the trio hurried forward with a red-handled maul from an emergency case.

"Quick. Smash that lock!"

Back in the club car a disheveled figure appeared. His face was grim, his eyes bloodshot, and in his right hand he clutched a big automatic pistol. It was the pump man.

He was not a heroic figure, as heroes go. His was a prosaic existence. He ran a gasoline engine for a living, and fiddled with pumps. For diversion, he read light fiction in yellow, coverless, six-months-old pulp magazines, and played cribbage with a moon-faced track foreman—and flipped his paw sociably at passing hogheads and shacks.

However, there smoldered deep in his gasoline-tainted soul an inherent something that makes all railroad men kin. Ordinarily his disposition was about on a par with the rest of his kind. He flamed quickly and did a lot of cussing which didn't mean a thing. Nevertheless, when thoroughly aroused he was a very different breed of cattle. In the present hectic moments the pump man was a potential killer.

He charged into the club car.

"Where are the train robbers?" Only he did not designate them by that particular title.

"Ahead!" Half a dozen wide-eyed and excited passengers indicated the direction the bandits had taken in their hurried retreat.

Treading on the heels of the pump man came Big Jim Crocker. His lips were tight-drawn and bloodless, his eyes deep, grim wells of fire. He too gripped an automatic pistol.

"It's all right, gentlemen," he reassured those who crowded around "Everything will be all right now. Don't worry. We'll bottle those birds up in the baggage car, and the train will be in San Marcos in just a little while. Some of you go back through the sleepers and quiet the passengers."

The pump man was eying the gun he held a little doubtfully. "How do you work the thing?"

"Pull the trigger and squeeze the gimmick in the butt," growled Big Jim. "Don't you know anything at all scarcely?"

As they moved on toward the baggage car they were joined by the rear brakeman and the section boss. In the course of their progress they had acquired two mattresses. Thus fortified, they were prepared to lend what aid they could.

"I'll go first," said the section boss, "and jerk a couple of trunks around for a barricade."

"How did you get aboard, you blasted old Turk?" snorted the pump man. "Here, gimme that mattress!"

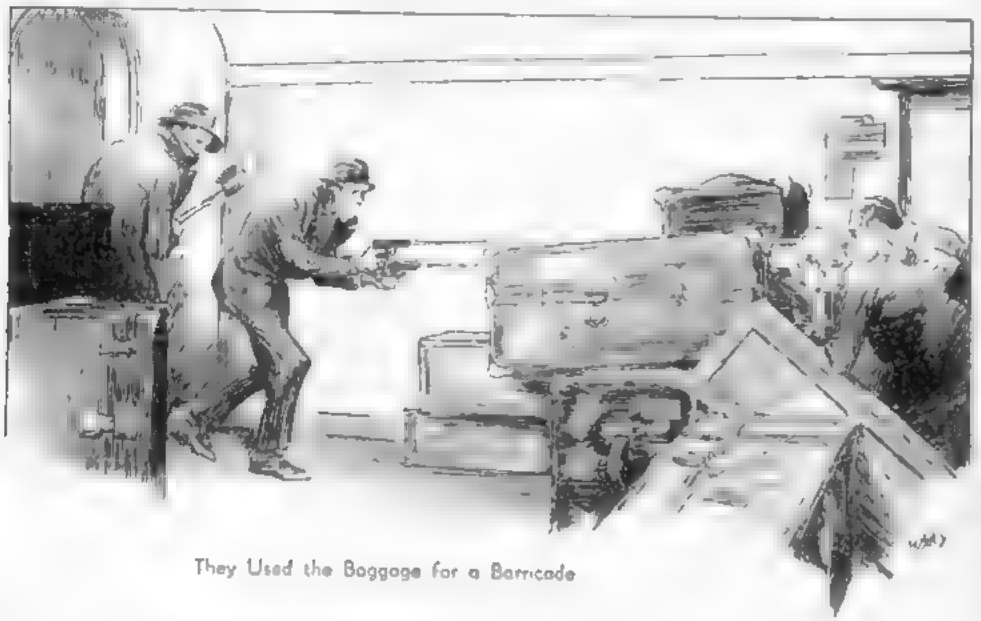
"Go get your own! I'm going ahead!"

"You are, in a pig's eye! An old married stiff like you!"

A moment later the rear door of the baggage car burst open, and a strange and muddled assortment of mattresses,

arms, legs, heads and automatic pistols heaved through the opening like a giant comic tumbleweed.

The three train robbers, intent only on getting through the door at the forward end of the car, and with the rapidly increasing thunder of the engine in their ears, received their first intimation of impending disaster when a gun roared and a forty-five caliber slug flattened and spattered from the steel car end close to their heads.



They Used the Baggage for a Barricade

The bandit leader flung up his gun and fired, while for the first time a cold claw of panic gripped at his heart. The job had gone sour with a vengeance. They were cornered in the baggage car of a train that was already pounding through the night straight toward a desert city and its fearless clan of desert deputy sheriffs.

The four determined railroad men at the rear of the car had flung a barricade of trunks in front of them almost before the bandits realized what was happening. They had not been prepared for a complete reversal like this. The shots at the station, they had supposed, were merely to subdue some rebellious member of the crew. It now appeared, however, that they had been of more than passing significance.

The voice of the pump man rose hoarsely from behind a big sample trunk. "We got one of your yellar-bellied gunmen!" he bellowed. "And we're going to get the rest of you!" And the pump man experimented with this new type of shooting iron that had come into his life.

Desperately the train robbers sought shelter behind such luggage as was nearest to them. There was hope to escape neither from the side doors of the car nor through the locked end door. They were cornered, and how many guns were in possession of their attackers they could not know. Death was riding.

Twice the pump man fired. The slightest movement beyond affording an excuse to shoot.

"Save 'em, you fool!" hissed the engineer. "All we got left is what cartridges there are in these gats."

"Hell, I thought they held a bushel!" muttered the other.

Thus the affair in the baggage car resolved itself into a stand-off. For the bandits, it was checkmate. They had, they told each other snarlingly, been cursed by a jinx. Luck was against them. Because they were what they were, the ruthless killer band could never know or—knowing—they could never understand the thing that rode the rails to-night.

Far beyond the mighty arching dome of the desert, somewhere down the starlit paths of Glory, at the footstool of the Master of it all, the guardian angel of the traveler — and on his throne in the heavens, the God of High Iron.

Steel on steel. And the echoing crash of it stirring distant echoes from red, striated cliffs, to send hurtling back to other ramparts of erosion the joyous tempest of her going. Conqueror of the last frontier; monarch of the Cañon Division — queen of the wasteland, whipping west. That was No. 1, the Indian.

Danny O'Neil, dying, willed himself to live. Not years, or months, or days —but minutes. A mighty train was careening west under his hand and eye. Travelers, giving themselves confidently into the care of man of flesh and his tempest of steam and iron, were riding back there, their safety dependent on him. And because the thing was bred in him, Danny O'Neil, railroad man, was going to bring them into San Marcos.

His eyes were getting dim. He found it hard to see down those polished rail-lengths—oh, so hard. He saw lights where there were none, and where the gray, silent signal guardians reared their heads, he saw nothing.

Somewhere a steel bridge strummed under the rushing train. And instantly the mind of Danny O'Neil recorded this fact, vaguely but persistent in that eternal night that was closing about him. Blue Cañon! The name seared itself in his brain. It was three miles east of San Marcos.

In a welter of night Danny O'Neil found the throttle, and battled mechanically to close it. No need of emergency air, he told himself. He wouldn't have to dynamite 'em. A service reduction in a minute — and another when he heard the clatter of switches and frogs under the drivers.

Once the shiny handle of the brake equipment found its way slowly from running to service position. Then back to release, and again to running position. No. 1, with the tight grip of brake shoes against its wheels, slowed, and drifted on, under perfect control Pinched well down on the rail.

In the yards slightly west of the depot the Indian ground to a dead stop Waiting there were officers—and doctors. But of the latter there was no need.

Men flung themselves into the cab, and found there a grimy, ragged, bloody man. Danny O'Neil. His eyes were far down the track where bright rails stretched away in the path of the headlight. His lips moved, and his hand half raised toward the throttle.

"Green!" he murmured. "Green board! I'm highballing through."

And then he was gone. Down the silvery rails, where they reach away, and merge, and fade forever on the rim of the Last Frontier.

THE END

The Rail-Trail Blazer!

By James Edward Hungerford

"A RAILROAD man I've been for years,"
Said "Uncle Bill" to me;
"I've traveled through this vale o' tears,
An' seen strange sights to see;
I've 'boomed' wherever boomers boomed,
An' took life as it came,
An' faced the future, as it loomed,
An' stuck, an' played the game!

"I've helped to blaze the trails o' steel,
Throughout this blessed land;
I've known a pick an' crowbar's feel,
An' sweat to beat the band.
I've planted ties, an' spiked the rails
Fer miles an' miles on end,
An' traveled all the shinin' trails
Wherever railroads wend!

"I've lived fer months in boomer camps,
Of which 'oldtimers' tell,
An' driven gangs of bums an' tramps,
On jobs as tough as hell!
I've bossed peons, bohunks an' chinks,
An' wild, ungodly crews,
Before the days of Volstead drinks,
When men downed demon booze!

"I've been in fights, when blood flowed free,
An' guns blazed in the murk,
To let 'em know the 'Boss' was me—
An' drive them bums to work!
Beneath the blazin' desert skies,
I've blistered in the sun;
An' laid the rails through snow an' ice,
An' laughed—an' called it fun!

"Them days are gone," sighed Uncle Bill,
A tear-mist in his eyes;
"But in my dreams I live 'em still,
An' up there in the skies,
When Him that 'bosses' calls me home,
To trail the Milky Way,
My spirit 'round that land will roam—
In search o' tracks to lay!'"

EXTRA

VALHALLA

VOL. YES VALHALLA,

HONK AND HORACE

VALHALLA MEN REJOICE AT NEWS

Butch Poteet and Armitage Celebrate Glad Tidings of Coming Event

When the *Clarionet* reporter to-day spread the news to Butch Poteet, Doc Pillsbury and Mr. Armitage, that definite and authentic news had been received of the return of Honk and Horace to Valhalla, there was general cause for rejoicing among the male population. In fact, fragrant fumes came from the back room of one of the local drug stores and the *Clarionet* reporter is positive that there were sounds of much mirth and joy, mingled with the gurgles and a popping which sounded suspiciously like the removal of corks from bottles

Doc Pillsbury

Mr. Poteet, who still is in charge of the section gang at Valhalla and whose eight children are all doing very well, staggered from the drug store and waved his hand in the air to exclaim that not since the armistice had such good news reached the community

The *Clarionet* could not learn definitely what plans are being made by the men at Valhalla to welcome the returning heroes, but it is understood that the social activities will continue for at least a week

Mr. Poteet will head the committee on arrangements, and if definite word can be had as to when the heroes of

Butch Poteet

many a Valhalla escapade will arrive, the band will be duly polished and shined and sent to the station.

It is rumored that Honk and Horace will return to their duties on the Transcontinental after they have had a chance to rest, following their journey here. Local officials, however, would say nothing on this point, and in railroad circles the news of their return caused widespread speculation

During their former residence here, Honk and Horace enjoyed high prestige on the Transcontinental, but it has been pointed out that the war has wrought many changes and it is uncertain just where they might fit in

Read

HONK and HORACE

In April

RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE

(Adv.)

MRS. ARMITAGE FORMS PROGRAM

Women of Valhalla Will Do Their Share to Welcome Returning Heroes

Mrs. Armitage to-day took definite charge of the women's program to welcome the return of Honk and Horace. It is understood that there was some difference of opinion between Mrs. Armitage and Mrs. Dupont-Skaggs, but this has been wiped out and harmony again reigns supreme

Mrs. Armitage

Resolutions were adopted today by the Quilting Club and also by the Friday Book Club expressing gratitude over hearing some word from two of Valhalla's most important citizens who long ago were given up for dead.

Mrs. Dupont-Skaggs

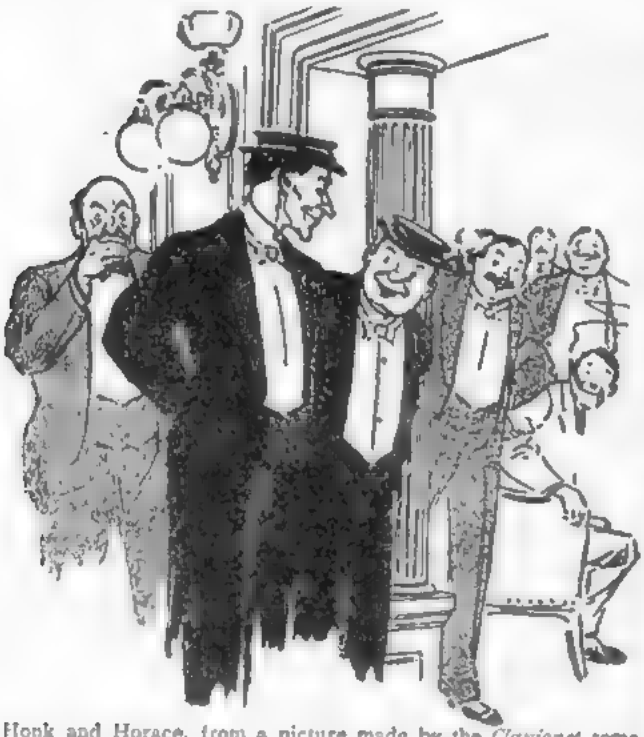
One of the ladies has been appointed to write a suitable poem commemorating the occasion of the heroes' return

It is understood that the women will vie with the men in making the old town ring with laughter, merriment and general celebrations

CLARIONET EXTRA

MARCH 1, 1930 No. No.

VALHALLA - BOUND



Honk and Horace, from a picture made by the *Clarionet* some years ago during a local celebration

EMMET F. HARTE IS WRITING HORACE'S OWN STORY OF TRIALS

NEW YORK — Any doubt about the return of Honk and Horace to Valhalla was put at rest to-day when a representative of the *Clarionet* found the two railroad men in their hotel here and pinned them down to answer definite questions.

"I have nothing at all to say," said Honk. "Any statement as to our movements will have to come from Horace who is at this time directing our joint affairs."

Emmet F. Harte is writing our full story in RAILROAD MAN' MAGAZINE, and I am sure that it will contain the very essence of literary quality to say nothing of a great deal of information," Horace stated. "Watch for it April 1.

To say too much now would serve only perhaps to take the edge off the real thrill contained in the document we now have under preparation. You may tell the good folks in Valhalla and elsewhere, who are displaying interest in us, that we will inspect ourselves in the usual way upon our arrival at home."

FAMOUS PAIR SEEN IN N.Y., SAYS REPORT

Railroaders to Write History of Their Escapades for April Railroad Man's

NEW YORK (By Apathetic Press) — Hancock Simpson, more affectionately known as Honk, and his obese and jovial sidekick Horace, were reported seen here to-day by eastern officials of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Emmet F. Harte, the noted author and long time director of the destinies of the two, is now at work with them on their experiences, which will be published in RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, beginning April 1.

A glimpse of these two old-timers was caught at several railroad general offices.

It was understood, at a hotel at which they were registered, that they were to head for Valhalla at the earliest opportunity.

Interest has been rife here in Valhalla for better than three months over the continually rumored return of Honk and Horace.

In fact, many of their friends have been waiting and watching hopefully for some word of them since they last were heard of at the time they embarked to help win the world war.

Boomer Brown's Clothes Were the Last Word in What the Well Dressed Man Should Wear

A Railroad Romeo

Friendship and Fortunes Are Lost in the Shuffle When a "Boomer" Turns Husband and "Home Guard"

By James E. Earp

EVERYBODY in the Pineville yards knew "Boomer" Brown and Romeo Ralston. They were the Damon and Pythias of the railroad game. When you hired one, you automatically hired the other. The same was true if one was fired. They were the inseparable ones. Not even Romeo's love affairs which were many and often could put so much as a tiny dent in the firm cement of their friendship ties.

All of which but added to the amazement of the crew on the graveyard shift when Boomer Brown dropped in on them one night after nearly three years of absence. Boomer's clothes were the last word in what the well dressed man should wear, and he sported yellow spats, a cane, white gloves and a purple tie. A big diamond glistened on his finger and its twin shone like the headlight of an electric locomotive from his purple tie. Either stone equalled the yearly salary of any switchman.

But it was not the Boomer's clothes which occasioned so much the surprise. Neither was it the show of carbon in tie and on finger. The most astounding thing to the graveyard crew was the fact that Boomer Brown was alone and minus the well-known Romeo Ralston. That thought was uppermost in the mind of "Dustpan" Kelly as he shook hands, but he did not dare to voice it. He left that to the fearless "Humpy" Cain. For once, however, Humpy passed up the opportunity to satisfy his and his partner's curiosity. It was "Knowitall" Bonner, their foreman, the sage of the switch shanty, who saved the day.

"And your friend, Romeo?" Knowitall inquired. "He is with you?"

"He's no friend of mine!" Boomer retorted as he sat down on a bench, unmindful of possible dirt or grease on the cushions. "And he certainly is not with me."

"Not dead is he?" cut in Dustpan.

"Might as well be," Boomer grunted. "He's married."

Silence in the switch shanty. Boomer Brown selected a fat cigar from a well filled cigar case and passed them around.

"And I helped him to get married," Boomer resumed with a shrug of his shoulders. "I thought I was doing him a favor. I was, but he didn't have sense enough to realize it. It's a long story, but I'll tell it to you some time. Right now—"

"We've got twenty minutes before we go to work," Knowitall informed him quietly.

"I can tell it in ten," said Boomer.

I guess I don't have to tell you that Romeo was a natural born love maker, Boomer began slowly. He was a regular railroad Romeo with all the trimmings and then some. He could fall in and out of love easier than a wild hoghead can knock a caboose off center, and no matter where we landed for a job Romeo always managed to have at least one violent love affair

It didn't make any difference who the girl was or what she looked like to Romeo. Falling in love with him was as natural as growing wool on a sheep's back. Some fellows require a band, moonlight and a pretty girl to work up to the proposal stage, but not Romeo.

Nope, all he asked for was a girl. After that he could handle the rest. The only thing I can say about his love affairs is that they never got monotonous, no matter how fast they came. Romeo could find more ways of courting trouble in his love affairs than a porcupine has quills. But I never got worried because I never dreamed that he was a marrying man. His kind seldom is. You know what he did here to that fly-by-night biscuit shooter at the beanery when he deserted her on the eve of their wedding

Well, that was Romeo. Here to-day and gone to-morrow as far as love was concerned. After we left here we landed up at Plattville with the T. N. O. as a pair of cinder crunchers. Three days after our arrival Romeo starts to stage another love affair.

This time it's with an actress in one of these tank town troupes. This dame does the strong woman act between curtains and is sure one hardboiled looking baby. She could lift a thousand pounds easier than Romeo could lift a cigarette, and she had a neck on her like a Durham bull. The outfit was scheduled to play a week, and I don't have to tell you that we saw that show every night as well as every matinée during that week.

But it's the second night of the show

that Romeo decides to fall in love with the strong woman. From then on, all he talks about and dreams about is this baby giant. The next morning, the first thing, he writes her a letter telling her of his love.

Nope, he don't get no answer to it. And he don't get none to the next one he writes. This sure puzzles Romeo because he ain't used to the females not falling for his love stuff. By the time Saturday rolls around Romeo is going around mopey like and wondering whether life is worth living or not.

"I must meet her," Romeo groans to me. "I must see her, if only to say good-by."

So off goes a special delivery letter with a return envelope in it. Saturday evening just as we come from work, the letter arrives. It's from this dame. His letters have touched her heart. She will meet him that night outside the stage door at eleven. He must wear a red ribbon in his buttonhole so she will recognize him.

Does he meet her? He does. I'm standing back in the shadows to watch the performance. At exactly eleven o'clock the stage door opens and a man pops through. And what a man! In his street clothes he looked like a giant. One look up and down the alley and his eyes lit on Romeo.

"So, you're the red hot papa, eh!" says this giant to Romeo. "You're the little village cut-up what's been sending me those mash notes, eh? Well, you little harem hound, take this as a good-by kiss from your papa."

"Take This as a Good-By Kiss From Your Papa"

Then he swings one of those sledge-hammer fists of his and it sounds like somebody hitting a board against the side of a house when it connects with Romeo's jaw. Romeo goes down for the count and the giant moves off. I wait till I'm sure he is out of sight before I go to Romeo to see how bad he's hurt.

And is he hurt? He is. I empty all the water out of the fire buckets trying to bring him around. When they don't do the biz, I call a taxi and a doctor and take him home. For four days Romeo lives on oatmeal and mush and soft boiled eggs on account of his jaw being bad ordered. By the time he gets up and around the story of his love affair is all over town.

"We might as well move on," he says to me. "I can't stand this joshing, Boomer. How was I to know the strong woman was a man?"

II

So we moved on to Hardwood. There he meets up with Grace. She is one of the beanery queens who dealt them from the arm at the Railroad Café. She has a wicked eye and a glib tongue, and three days after our arrival Romeo announces his engagement to her

"We're to be married in June," he announces to me. "She wants to go to Colorado on the honeymoon."

"Fine," I replies. "It gets hot here in June."

I don't say no more until payday in June. By that time I've got better than one hundred iron men saved up, not counting my back pay. I mention to Romeo that we ought to be looking for a job somewhere in the mountains to spend our summer.

"Good idea!" Romeo nods. "I'm getting tired of this place anyway. We'll leave on the Express to-morrow night. I'll notify Grace this afternoon that the marriage proposition is all off—that the doctor says I must go away for my health."

From what I could gather Grace took it hardly easily. Romeo was all smiles when he reported back to me as to his success. The next morn we give notice to the yardmaster and ask for time checks. I'm in my room packing my few clothes when Romeo comes stumbling in, his eyes wide and glassy and his face white as a sheet.

"She's gone!" he wails. "Nobody knows where. Manager says she skipped out last night."

"Who's gone?" I shoot back.

"Grace," says he. "She's gone."

"Well, what of it?" I ask. "You didn't want to marry her?"

"I know," he sobs. "But she had all my money. We were saving up together to get married. Now she's gone with all my money."

Well, I almost pass out at this bit of information. Of all the foolish stunts he had pulled in the past, this one was the most foolishest. Right then I give him a bit of advice.

"Listen," I says. "You'd better soft pedal on this love stuff. Two lemons in a row ought to prove to you that your technique ain't what it used to be. You're slipping, kid. The dames are just using you for come on play. Better pass up this love and marriage sport and be yourself."

He looks up at me with a pitiful expression on his face. "You really think I'm slipping, Boomer?" he wants to know.

"I do," I replies. "The last two times prove it. Now, to look for another job."

We found the job at Rollins, Wyoming. Our boarding house is a pri-

vate place run by the Widow Gordon and her daughter, Alice, the last named one of these blue-eyed, fair-haired babies with the face of an angel whose voice reminds you of angelic music and pipe organs and such. Romeo takes one look and forgets his past two failures immediately.

"She's wonderful!" he tells me when we're alone. "She's glorious."

"Again?" I frown. "Already?"

"Oh, don't worry," he shoots back. "She couldn't be interested in a bum like me. Why, I'm not fit to touch her, let alone marry her."

For a week he holds that thought. Then Alice begins her little play for him. If we have chicken he gets the choicest pieces. If it's pie he gets the biggest hunk, and all that. In two weeks Romeo is spending all his spare time around the boarding house helping Alice with everything from washing the dishes to scrubbing the floors. Finally he comes to me with eyes shining.

"You'll never believe it, Boomer," he bubbles. "But Alice loves me. We're engaged. As soon as I can save up a thousand dollars we're to be married."

That makes me laugh. On our salary it would take Romeo two years to save that much money. I tell him so. He shakes his head.

"I don't care if it takes ten," he replies. "She's worth it."

I don't say no more. Judging by past performances, something will happen in time to let us move out of Rollins just about the time cold weather is due to arrive. Something always happened to wreck his love affairs, so I refuse to be worried.

But to my surprise, nothing happens. Three months slip by with Romeo banking his spare cash every payday in his own name. I didn't think so much about it when he quit playing pool and shooting craps. But when he gave up cigarettes in order to save a little more money, I begin to believe that at last the boy means business. By the time the cold winds begin to whip down into town and he refuses to budge from his job and Rollins, I'm pretty sure of it. When I mention leaving for a warmer clime he gets mighty sad like.

"You wouldn't leave me now, would you, old pal?" he says. "Why, I need you now more than ever before. Don't desert me now."

Now, what could I do in a case like that? I did just what any other good pal would have done. I decided to stay and see it through.

My plan was to save my money and lend it to Romeo to put with his own and get married. After marriage he could pay me back a little at a time. It was a good idea, but the weather got so blamed cold up there that I began to lose interest in that scheme. Figure as I might, I knew that I was due to stay in that refrigerator for the winter and part of the next summer and lose a pardner in the end.

So what do I do payday but break over. I takes my bank roll and hits for Pete's Place, the biggest gambling house in Rollins, to try and run my bank roll up to the amount Romeo needed for wedding funds. When I leave there I've lost everything except my clothes and my membership in the B. R. T. I suppose I'd have lost those if Pete could have used them.

I'm feeling pretty blue the next few days. So is Romeo when I tell him the sad tale. Things are looking pretty dark when a lawyer hunts Romeo up to tell him that an aunt down in Texas has kicked off and left her entire estate to him. Said estate consisting of eighty acres of land and a house.

"Any money?" Romeo asks eagerly.

"None at all," says the law boy. "Not enough to pay the administrator's fees. But you can pay them when you get the estate. Then, there's two years' taxes due as well. We've been looking for you for a long time. Give me a check for fifty dollars and we'll close up the deal, hand you the estate and get out of town."

Romeo loses no time in doing it. He has an idea that he'll be able to sell the land and get married. As soon as he gets things settled he writes a real estate shark near the town to see if he can sell the land. The real estate shark writes back that his advice would be to refuse to accept the land at all. According to the real estate man, the land consists of eighty acres of sand and centipedes so worthless that you could not even raise a mortgage on it, let alone a crop.

And the house on it is nothing but a sod house. All of this info is a knockout to our plans. On the strength of it I go uptown payday and buy myself the heaviest winter clothes I can find. With what's left I go down to Pete's to tackle the galloping dominoes again.

"Old Joe Must Be Drunk Again," Says a Guy at My Elbow

III

Once more I'm cleaned of funds While I'm standing around calling myself forty different kinds of fools I see an old man over in one corner of the place who is talking about his rheumatism and cold weather and damning Wyoming from A to Zebra and back again.

"And if I ever get enough money, I'll leave this God forsaken hole so far behind that I can't even write to it," the old fellow is saying. "I'm going to buy me a place in the sunny south where there ain't no such things as snow and rheumatism and sheep."

"Old Joe must be drunk again," says a guy at my elbow. "Great old sheepman is Joe Thompson. Always talks about leaving Wyoming when he's drunk. But when he's sober you could not drive him away. He owns a big sheep ranch up in the hills and is worth a mint of money."

Right then I am hit with a bright idea. I goes over and introduces myself to him. He invites me to have a drink and I accept. Then he wants to know where I'm from.

"I'm from sunny Texas," I tells him. "I own a big plantation down there which is going to rack and ruin on account of the bankers refusing to loan me money to buy cottonseed and plant a crop of cotton. I'm working here on the railroad trying to get enough money to plant it next year. Of course, we had two crop failures in a row, but I know we won't have a third. I tried to tell the bankers that, but they refuse to believe me."

"Shame!" says Joe. "Less have a drink."

We do. I ditch mine because I never liked the stuff. But Joe downs his and yells for the following section.

"Whass your place looksh like?" Joe wants to know.

I told him what I thought would appeal to him. I painted Romeo's sandy prairies in glowing colors. Talked feelingly about the cotton fields waving their snowy arms in gay abandon to a land of perpetual sunshine and summer. Pictured the sunsets and the old colonial home in terms that a writer would have envied. And the more I talked, the bigger Joe's eyes got.

"Boofful place," says Joe as I finish. "Less have nuzzer drink."

"Gorgeous," I answers. "And with a little money to put it in shape it could be made the show place of the State. I'd sell a half interest in it if I could find a good fellow to take in as partner who had some money."

"I got money," said old Joe, flashing a wad of bills that would have filled my hat. "Got lots of money. Also got rheumatism. Got everything but shunny shouthern home." He starts sobbing. "Less have nuzzer drinksh, and you shell me interest in shunny shouthern home. Gotta have my shunny shouthern home."

Do I sell him a half interest? I do. Just as soon as I can get hold of Romeo and get old Joe to a lawyer's office to make out the papers. Joe pays a thousand dollars for his share of the eighty acres of sands and centipedes and Romeo is so tickled he can hardly wait till the papers are signed to get back to Alice and tell her the good news. My share costs me one dollar, but Joe does not know that then.

The next week Romeo and Alice are married. I'm the best man. There was no honeymoon because Alice figured it was a waste of money.

Just as soon as the knot is tied I walk out on them. My mind is made up to leave Rollins and cold winter and hit for a job farther south. As I head toward the depot and the trainmaster's office, who do I bump into but Joe Thompson.

"Just the fellow I'm looking for," says Joe all grim like. "Got a little business to tend to with you."

"With me?" I asks, all surprised.

"With you," Joe comes back all hardboiled. "I just been down to look

at our sunny southern home." His fingers slide into his overcoat pocket and I could see the muzzle of a gun pointing through it at me. "It's a wonderful place, but I'm too old to change residences. I've decided to sell it back to you."

"But I haven't got any money," I fuss. "I'm clean broke."

"You'll be clean dead if you don't come through," Joe threatens. "I'm a poor, but honest sheepman, and anybody'll tell you that I've put many a notch on my gun by killing off such crooks as you. You'll buy back that land or I'll fill you so full of holes your body won't hold water."

Oh, he meant it. No doubt about that. I'm just wondering who will pay my funeral bills when I'm dead and gone if he shoots me. Maybe Joe guesses what is in my mind for he settles things for me.

"On second thought, killing would be too good for you," says Joe. "I've changed my mind. I'm going to teach you a good lesson. You got a job here?"

"Yes."

"Fine. How much you make?"

I tells him. He smiles.

"Fine. You pay me fifty dollars a month until you've paid me one thousand dollars for my share of the land."

I look at Joe and the gun in his pocket and swallows hard as I admit it does, which is some lie. He nods his head in that grim way he has and says:

"And don't think you can run out on me and leave me flat, young man. I've got fifty thousand dollars to spend on hunting down just such crooks as you. And I don't mind telling you that I'd spend everything I got to find you if you tried to get out of it. No man can trim Joe Thompson and live to brag about it."

So that's his proposition. I can take it or leave it. I take it. I figure I'm too young to die so soon. The next thing to do is to hunt up Romeo and tell him my troubles. Maybe he will help me out.

"That's a shame," says Romeo. "I'm sorry. If I can help you—"

"You can," I says. "You can give me board and room at your place for the time it takes me to pay Joe off. That's not much to ask for. After all, I did it to help you, you know."

"I'll ask Alice," says Romeo dubiously. "I don't know what she'll say."

Am I stunned at this? I am. I'm even more stunned when Alice puts her foot down on any boarders coming in on her. It seems that she is planning on her mother selling the boarding house and moving in on them to spend the rest of her life. The old lady does that very trick a month later. Romeo reports back to me that there's nothing doing.

"But it's your land!" I protest.

"No," he corrects me with a grin. "It's yours. I sold it to you."

"You mean," I inquire, "that you won't help me?"

"Not a bit," he replies. "I didn't ask you to cheat the old fellow. You had that idea yourself."

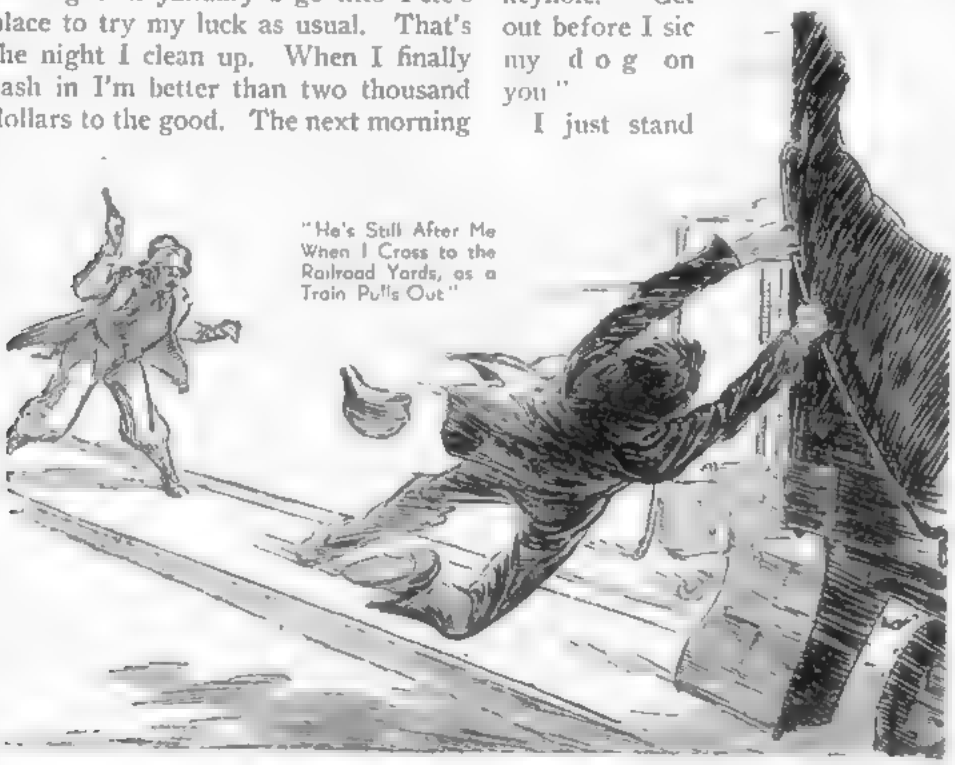
IV

Well, that's where our friendship ceased. After all I'd done for him. Nothing left for me to do but shoulder my own sins and carry them as best I could. I was sure one sick man as I reported for work that night.

And I get sicker as the months fly by. Every payday sees old Joe on hand to collect fifty dollars in payment on the eighty acres of sands and centipedes. The weather gets colder and colder and

the snows come to stay till spring and everything is lovely, if you don't care what you say. After the third payday I get desperate. I start playing Pete's place with what I have left of my salary after all my bills are paid.

I still owe Joe eight hundred dollars the night in January I go into Pete's place to try my luck as usual. That's the night I clean up. When I finally cash in I'm better than two thousand dollars to the good. The next morning I pay Joe in full, get the papers transferred and leave town before my time check arrives. They mail that to me in Hot Springs, Arkansas.



"He's Still After Me When I Cross to the Railroad Yards, as a Train Pulls Out"

For two years I move around from job to job, never happy, never satisfied. The fact of the matter is, I'm homesick for Romeo and lonesome for a sight of him, in spite of the way he treated me. Finally I decide to go to Rollins and see him and Alice.

Yes, he was still there, the yardmaster told me. The call boy pointed the way to where he lived. I mosey up to the place and into the yard and knocks on the door. Romeo himself opens the door.

"Romeo," I says. "How is the boy?"

He just takes one look at me and slams the door in my face. "Get out of here, you bum!" he yells through the keyhole. "Get out before I sic my dog on you."

I just stand stunned at this. Then the door opens again and Alice stands there. In her hand is a teakettle full of hot water.

"I've been saving this for you," says Alice. "I always knew you were a crook."

That's enough for me. I dodge the stream of water she heaves at me and makes for the gate just as a mean looking dog comes around the corner and starts nibbling at my legs. I don't take time to open the gate but hurdles it with a jump, the dog after me. It took me two blocks before I could get away from that dog.

As if that wasn't enough disappointment for the day, who do I run into downtown but old Joe Thompson himself. The old man is pretty well poisoned, but not enough to keep him from knowing me.

"You!" says old Joe. "Well, I'll be—"

I lost the rest of his remarks because his hand has gone to his pocket and whips out a gun. Before he could pull the trigger I'm ducking around a corner and tearing up the alley as hard as I can tear with old Joe shooting away at every chance sight of me.

He's still after me when I cut across to the railroad yards. A train is pulling out and I manage to fall on the caboose platform all out of breath. For once I'm lucky. Tex Stevens is the conductor and he knows me.

"What's the idea?" Tex wants to know.

"I don't know," I admits and tells him my story.

"Oh, I know all that," says Tex. "What I mean is, why are you running around here like a tramp when you own all that rich oil land down in Texas?"

"What?" says I.

Tex looks at me funny like. "Mean to tell me, Boomer, that you don't know about that acreage of eighty acres you sold Joe Thompson and he made you buy it back?"

"Not a thing," I replies. "What about it?"

"What about it. Why, man! From what I hear it's worth a million dollars. There's been a dozen men here looking for you to buy it or lease it from you so they can drill for oil on it. It's in the heart of the greatest oil belt ever found. Romeo has been like a wild man ever since he heard about it—and old Joe has threatened to kill you on sight for buying it back from him."

"But he made me!" I protested dumbly. "I didn't want to. And I tried to get Romeo to help me, but he wouldn't. Why should they—"

"It's human nature," Tex tells me. "We always get the worst of it when we try to help somebody that isn't worth helping. But you take my advice and go down to see about your holdings, and if you need a good man to help you spend your money, just call on me."

Well I went down and found things as Tex described them I leased the land to a syndicate for eighty thousand iron men. They brought in a well that paid royalties of fifty thousand a month. Since then they've had a dozen more gushers and I have to have a special man to keep my income figured up.

Here Boomer Brown paused in his recital to wipe away a tear. Humpy Cain looked puzzled as he put a question.

"Why the tears, Boomer?" he asked. "Why, you ought to be happy now that you're rich."

"I know," nodded Boomer. "But I can't be. Somehow, I can't forget poor Romeo and his treatment of me. You know I was always fond of that little cuss even if he was a railroad Romeo."

He got to his feet and tossed away his cigar. Then:

"My private car is over on the spur. I've got a French chef and everything. You boys come over and eat with me to-morrow noon. Glad to have you." Another sigh. "Romeo would have liked that. He always liked to eat."

Boomer Brown faded into the darkness outside. For just a full minute silence reigned in the switch shanty. Dustpan Kelly was the first to break it.

"Well, what do you think about that?"

Streak ng the Rust Over a Sink-hole

Battling North to Hudson Bay

Blizzards, Into erable Cold and the Scourge of Fever Failed to Halt the Path of Steel to World's End

By Jack Paterson

IN 1926 the Canadian Government and Canadian National Railways officials called their engineering department on the mat, and said something. What they said would take more track space than we can spare, but what they meant was this:

"Come on, boys—get hot! We've had a railroad headed for Hudson Bay since the days of yore. The folks in the West are squawking; the folks in the East are laughing; and folks everywhere say we were dam' fools ever to start it. It's becoming embarrassing Let's show 'em!"

The engineers waved a washout.

"Hold up," they said "Have you birds decided yet where you want this road to go to?"

There was a silence. At last the officials spoke.

"That's a good point," they said. "We'll have to decide where we want it to go to. But in the meantime, you've got lots of room. Start north under a full head of steam, and after we've made a few inquiries we'll shoot along your orders. Let's go!"

The engineering department went; and after many months of battling endless muskeg, unheard of construction

problems, and the withering cold of Canadian sub-Arctic winters, they pushed steel into Churchill, the West's new seaport on the shores of Hudson Bay.

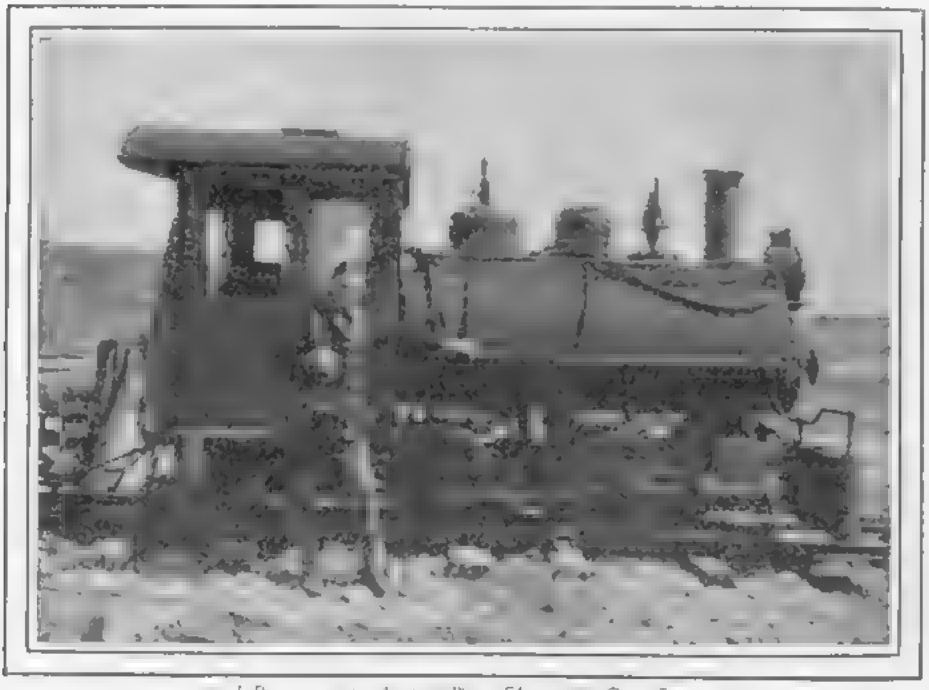
The dream of years has come true. The West has a shortened rail route to salt water, and skeptical tongue waggers—concerning the railway construction end of it at least—have been stilled. The feasibility of the newly connected water route for extensive freighting to Europe has in turn become a topic much discussed.

This northern water route is no new notion. As early as 300 years back the old boys with the lace and frills headed their ships into Hudson Bay; and for 250 years the Hudson's Bay Company boats have made these waters the point of distribution for their fur-trading posts. Well over a century ago western Canada's first settlers arrived via the same route, landing at Nelson and navigating a thousand miles of wilderness rivers and lakes to the Red River Valley at Winnipeg in southern Manitoba. For years this continued as the popular path. Then a railroad came north to Winnipeg from the United States, and later the Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental line arrived from the East. The Hudson Bay water route took the count.

They Talk Railroad

But the older settlers remembered the original port of entry, and with the popular advent of railroads an idea was born in the lee of several silky, brown beards. As a result, in the early eighties the necessity of a railroad to Hudson Bay was discussed in the Manitoba Legislature.

The consensus of official opinion then was that the old boys were all wet. Probably they were—then. To build a thousand miles of railroad



Jack Paterson, the Author, With Churchill's Only Taxicab

The Pioneer Tracklayer on the Barrens in the Famous Vastness

through an utter wilderness, even in these days, is an ambitious undertaking. In those days the task would have been stupendous. Even to mention it, required bravery.

Down through the years the idea was ridiculed, hammered, and smothered. But it persisted. A network of railroads covered the West, but always the "barren North" was ignored. Then in 1910—for either economic, pacific, or political reasons—a start was made on a government road North from Hudson Bay Junction — situated on the northernmost line in the West—and steel put through to the trading-post of The Pas, a distance of 90 miles. The following year the Saskatchewan River was bridged at The Pas, and construction continued into a wilderness of lake, muskeg, and light timber, a country inhabited by Indians and a few wandering traders.

The obstacles on this job were many. There was little rock work. Rock work would have been welcomed. When contractors have blasted their way through a hill of rock there is at least a solid foundation at that spot and along the dump. With muskeg, bottom is usually a thing of mystery. Tackling rock a man can see what there is to do. He has something solid to work on. With muskeg it means fighting in the dark. Fighting a shifty, treacherous bog mass that defies man's every attempt to conquer it.

In places a stretch of this spongy, mucky ground would be crossed with little difficulty, graded, steel laid, and all hunki-dori. The next morning an amazed foreman would rave in despair at sight of the job. Where his complete job of the day before had been, now might be a yawning gap with a ladder of ties and rails suspended in space above it. A dozen times these

All in the Day's Work. This Jack Needs a Hearty Boost

sink-holes might be filled, only to have the works drop out of sight again. Where the fill went, nobody knew. What held it in place previously, nobody knew. One day bottom could be sounded; the next day the same place was bottomless.

These mystery monsters were not content with ballast material and bridgework. It is difficult to learn just what all went into these holes. In the face of stiff opposition to the road, in eastern Canada at that time, a certain secrecy in regard to such things was considered prudent.

To illustrate the treachery of these sink-holes one incident, vouched for by old-timers there at the time, will suffice. On a section of finished track a supply train was traveling north. As darkness approached they prepared to hang up for the night as was usual. It was raining—a dirty, dismal night. Crossing a piece of muskeg that had been conquered months before, the engine found a soft spot, and was derailed. Over she went, followed by a string of cars. The crew got clear. They wired back for the hook, and turned in for some shut-eye at a nearby camp. For hours it rained.

Whole Train Disappears

The morning broke clear, bright and fresh, but there was nothing to do but wait for the wrecker. Two of the crew strolled along to size up the mess. They stared in amazment. There was no mess. The locomotive, ten cars, and caboose had disappeared—swallowed at a gulp. The grade had accompanied the train, and a tangle of broken ties and steel was the only proof the trainmen had that they were trainmen. They wired back and stopped the hook. They wired lots of places and said many things. That's a northern sink-hole.

But sink-holes were only one source

of grief. All material and supplies had to be brought from far South and East. After the 1500 mile haul from the East to Winnipeg there were 400 miles of only fair road to Hudson Bay Junction, and several hundred more of terrible track on North. There were derailments, bridge crashes, waits for wrecking crews, waits for sink holes on the rampage, and, odd times, even waits for grub.

There was cold in winter that congealed everything, including rail activity. There were the wild things of the open spaces. Service was more than once hopelessly disrupted when telephone wires trailed through the bush were tangled in the horns of a fast-traveling and terrified moose. Bears visited cook tents and destroyed what they couldn't eat. Insects made life a hell — insects that could, in an hour, change a strong man into a raving maniac, if they found him unprotected.

Bush fires caused loss of life, time, material, miles of communications, and millions of dollars. Accident, sickness, epidemics, floods, loneliness. All these things, and many more, had to be battled by the men who built the road. In more than one place along the right of way the lonely cross on a wilderness grave tells a story.

Hard-boiled Bucks

These men were hard-boiled. They had to be. On one occasion, during a temporary grub scarcity, two Swedes were eating their scant lunch beneath a scrub pine. The container sat between them. One took his share of the lunch in his hand, the other left his in the pail while he got rid of a chew of "snooce." Hearing the pail rattle, he turned to protect his grub from a ravenous partner, and found a big black bear with the pail in his paws.

The one Swede clutched his lunch and high-balled it for the clear; but the other stood his ground. Hunger was strong within him. With a yowl, he grabbed the pail and hung on. As the bear made a swipe at him with one paw, the Swede yanked the pail loose and followed his fast-fading ditching mate down the center of the right of way. Ten minutes later, at a camp three miles along, he ate his lunch, while a first-aid man bandaged a badly clawed arm.

There is a well-known saying, relating to the old days, that "you can't build a railroad without booze." On the Hudson Bay Road, where for hundreds of miles there is nothing but scattered construction camps, inhabited exclusively by construction workers, this has been disproved. An odd crock may be smuggled from "outside," but never enough to interfere with the work. Men may crave liquor, but they don't get it, and they make the best of the situation

With snuff it is different. It has at least been proved that " you can't build a railroad without snooce," and this statement is not confined to the Scandinavian boys either. The one thing that will most quickly cause a stagger in the stride of the mighty construction machine, is a shortage of "Copenhagen." Gangs will live in tents through bitter weather, freeze, starve, swelter, suffer from insects, fight fire, or cheerfully die of thirst; but, cut off the snooce supply, and things go hay-wire. Without the beloved little tin-lidded box these northern workers become helplessly useless. Gangs lean on their ditching or grading shovels and mope. Foremen growl, and curse—the shortage.

But, when a roustabout or gas-car appears with the odd roll of snooce,

there is a change. Cans are slit open, generous pinches are shoved behind lower lips, and things start to move amidst the banter of contented and grinning workmen. Seldom is the supply allowed to become low, but, in case it does, a special messenger is considered economy. On at least one occasion a load was taken in by plane, for distribution.

Boomers Turn Eskimo. Tractor Men Run Up a Modern Bungalow Near Churchill

In a recent issue of RAILROAD MAN'S, mention was made of the "Passing of the Boomer." Naturally other railroads are noticing the absence of these men. It would appear that the Hudson Bay Road has claimed them all. Since the early days this new line has boasted a fine collection of boomers The old wanderlust took them north,' and Old Man Romance has kept them there. Eighteen years is a long time to spend in a wilderness, but many of them have done that time. Outside of infrequent trips to town to blow the works, they stay north.

I know two men, partners, whose idea of a holiday is to take a canoe and trail outfit, and travel the wilderness rivers for a month or two. Incidentally, they follow the Government parties paying annual treaty money to the Indians, and take an active part in ensuing celebrations. They are not traders, and their idea is not to pick up any of the native treaty wealth. On the contrary, they take a stock of presents along, and get a kick out of life by distributing them

Many of the old-timers are hired, fired, and re-hired at regular intervals. Bridge, steel, shovel, and pit men famous over a continent are content to stay in the shadow of the Arctic, where they are beholden to only one master. They are there for many reasons. The lure of the unknown, a little mistake on an earlier job, the chance to save a stake that will make any town hum for at least a few days, the urge to be wherever a tough job is to be done, or—

Checking the Bridge Before Trusting a Freight Train to Its Mercies

and this applies in many, many cases—to be in a country that is for men.

Deadline for Women

Beyond Mile 412 on the Bay line women are not allowed to go. Not only are they discouraged, but they are definitely halted at that point. In the northern barrens it is every man for himself, and no allowance of time is set aside for the practice of chivalry. World-famous and worthy women journalists, equipped with every credential, have tried to crash the gate. They met a courteous, but firm, refusal. There is only one credential that, in an emergency, will admit a woman to this man's domain — the wearing of a nurse's uniform.

One frostbitten old eagle-eye sized up the situation in a few terse words punctuated with tobacco juice. "We got plenty grief up in this God-forgotten vacant lot without havin' no women around," he growled

He was right. There was plenty grief. The last hundred miles to Hudson Bay was a tough proposition for tough men.

With the commencement of the Hudson Bay Road in 1910 the terminus had been located at Churchill, where there was a natural harbor. Then, after a survey had been completed at that point, it was decided to save 50 miles of rail construction by making Nelson, farther south on the Bay, the terminus

The location was switched, and in 1913 the construction of harbor works at Nelson began. Then, during the war, owing to a shortage of men and material, work on both the railroad and harbor ceased, with steel 330 miles northeast of The Pas

At Nelson many difficulties had been encountered. With shallow waters inshore, engineers decided that a bridge should be constructed running out to deeper water The plan called for an

artificial island to be built at the outer bridge end to carry docks, grain elevators, freight sheds, and railway spurs

This bridge, consisting of seventeen 150 foot spans or nearly a half mile in length, was completed, and the island partially built. Both are, at present, for sale cheap.

After much time and an alarming number of millions had been expended, it was realized that there had been a mistake somewhere. A nation-wide argument developed. Some claimed the terminus should have been kept at Churchill. Others continued to favor Nelson with its shorter rail haul. In 1927 the government acquired the services of a prominent engineer, Frederick Palmer, to make a thorough investigation into the possibilities of the two locations, and render a detailed report. This was done, the result being that Churchill, with its natural, storm-immune harbor, deep water, and better facilities for railway yards, was a clear winner. Nelson was promptly abandoned, any useful equipment being transferred by barge to Churchill

In the meantime the engineering department of the Canadian National Railways had obeyed the suggestion "get hot" and were reconditioning the old roadbed which, with the exception of a 200 mile stretch north from The Pas, had lain idle for 10 years. It was a heartbreaking mess, with roadbed, ditching, communications, and equipment to be overhauled

But during the two decades since the commencement of the road construction methods and equipment had improved. Certain phases of railway and transportation work in France during the war had provided new ideas. The latest in equipment was secured, every

Another Type of Bridge on the Hudson Bay Line Over Nelson River at Mile 332

ounce of brawn and brain was thrown into the job, and in 1927 the long delayed drive north to Churchill started with a bang.

It was a forbidding territory. From The Pas, 400 miles north, light timber and muskeg composed the scenery. For the last 100 miles over the Barrens into Churchill there was no scenery. This endless level plain, covered in summer with successive stretches of sloppy muck, shallow lakes, and an odd strip of stunted bush, presented a problem that ordinary methods of railway construction could not hope to conquer.

One Huge Swamp

One famous explorer has described this stretch as "the greatest continuous swamp in the world." For 150 miles to traverse it required hip waders. In summer no system of transportation was possible. The sloughs and shallow lakes were useless as waterways. In winter the ground and gravel deposits were frozen solid. At no time of the year was it possible to build a grade in readiness for steel. Technically, the job was simple. Both the profile and right of way were practically straight lines. But it was a good example of the old story gag: "How could I yump when I haf no place to stood?"

The engineering staff was in a blue funk. Time after time they went into a huddle, but to no avail. The big problem was, how to get stuff up ahead. Giant tractors for winter work were considered, and the idea dismissed. One man voiced his disgust. "This is a devil of a proposition," he growled. "To build a grade we need transportation; and there's no system of transportation possible until we get the grade built—"

Suddenly he stopped.

"I've got it," he yelled. "Lay the track first and haul our supplies over it. Lay it over the frozen ground and ballast it when the pits thaw next year!"

It proved the solution. Great quantities of ties and steel were mustered at The Pas and points north. The program called for steel to be into Churchill so that supply depots might be established before the spring break-up. Every department of the great machine was checked over. Only men whose vision and experience fitted them in every way for the job, were selected for this battle of the Barrens. Strong men who could stand the cold and bitterness of a long winter without cracking. Men who could step up, in any emergency, and keep things going. Men who realized what the cost might be in human life, and progress, should they falter or blunder.

No one ever can fully describe the hardships and torments endured by those men in a land of lung-freezing cold, where, for hundreds of miles, the Arctic gales have a free sweep over the bleak, barren wilderness. Frostbite, sickness, snow-blindness. Days when the mercury crawled down out of sight. Days of blinding blizzards and howling gales, that penetrated to their very souls. Nights spent in camps where only a red-hot stove, and the unfailing coal-supply system, stood between them and certain death in a land that defies natural growth and harbors not a stick of fuel.

Steadily, relentlessly, the great Pioneer Tracklayer, handled by two locomotives, crawled into the icy domain, conquering, mile by mile, the white desert; vomiting before it countless carloads of frost-brittle ties and steel; moving on a self-made trail toward the goal. Where it met heavy drifts a path was cleared; where it met a sharp

Tractor Plows Its Own Road Across the Barrens Near Churchill

depression temporary bridging was done.

Mile after monotonous mile, without a curve, without a landmark, they carried on. A schedule was laid down, and was strictly adhered to. If breakdown or impenetrable blizzard held up the work the lost time had to be recovered. Everything was figured closely. A date was set for the completion of steel-laying, and the schedule allowed only 15 additional days in which to get locomotives, shovels, gravel trains, and 500 cars of supplies over the rough track into Churchill, and the 500 empties out again before spring break-up.

They stopped for nothing. Steel was laid over lake, river, and muskeg ice. The Canadian National engineering forces realized the chance they took; but they took it. If steel failed to reach solid ground at Churchill before break-up, or if they failed to get supplies and material in, a whole season would be lost as well as a hundred or more miles of steel.

They made it. Averaging a mile of steel-laying a day, they reached the objective and commenced the hauling. Time was short. They worked like demons, and prayed for the breaks. They got them. Tough ones.

At Mile 327, which divisional point boasted the largest shops and payroll of the line, the bad-luck demon struck first. A small river from which the settlement got its water supply, froze to the bottom, causing sewage to back up past the intake. Unaware of this dangerous condition, trainmen and gangs up and down the line continued to use the tank water.

The typhoid epidemic broke out in a dozen camps at the same time. Calls came to the hospital at Mile 327 from all along the line. The hospital staff there—a doctor and two nurses—sent SOS calls south, and then, knowing that days must elapse before help could arrive, they faced the avalanche of fever-stricken patients alone.

The construction hospital was

equipped with six beds. Within a few hours five times that number were needed with new cases reporting unceasingly, and new calls for help coming from up the line. That was where army experience counted. That night big marquee tents were erected, floors built, and stoves installed. Before daylight there was a hospital annex of 47 beds, with every one of them filled. Still they came. Bunk cars were turned into fever wards. Loads of patients were sent out to The Pas to make room for new arrivals.

The Fight for Life

Dr. Shier, and Nurses Shomperlen and Tomlinson, worked frantically. Patients were attended, suspects examined, and everyone within reach inoculated. At first they worked without rest. Then rest became imperative, and a none too reliable schedule of 20 hours' work and 4 hours' sleep was arranged.

Then, when it seemed flesh and blood could stand no more, the weather took a hand. It began to snow, then blow. The hospital tents were sagged and swaying with the snow weight and fury of the wind, as the Northland for a radius of 500 miles was swept by the worst blizzard in its known history.

Around the tents were great drifts. Doctor and nurses floundered through snow knee-deep from tent to tent, answering the calls of the deathly sick, fighting to keep from falling exhausted while realizing that the storm must further delay the arrival of much needed help. But luckily help was well on the way, and arrived closely following the storm.

Of the work done by this construction doctor and his two girl helpers at that time, too much cannot be said. They went until they dropped. It was a piece of work rarely equalled in hospital history.

In the meantime, farther up the line, each day produced a new squad of typhoid patients. At Mile 412, Nurse Cotter, in charge of a construction hospital on wheels, was facing the same kind of odds. As rapidly as possible she cleared her patients to the main hospital, down the line, and admitted others.

Many, traveling north through the bad water zone, had contracted the sickness without showing symptoms until well on north at other camps. From the end of steel came word of more victims. A special train, with Nurse Cotter in charge, steamed over the new, frost-solid roadbed from Mile 412, to clear the typhoids from the tent hospital at Churchill.

On the return journey, with Nurse Cotter lone-handed tending 14 desperately ill patients, the special met the Barren-lands blizzard. Doggedly the engine and crew fought the drifting snow, but it was a losing battle. Another locomotive was rushed to the rescue, and with one front and one rear, gallant efforts were made to buck the outfit through.

The odds were too great; steadily, surely, the train was engulfed until only the smoke-stacks and car-tops showed through the top of the solid snow mound. For five days the blizzard howled while the nurse, assisted by the trainmen, slaved with her patients, slept on her feet, and fought against what looked like overwhelming odds, to save precious lives.

For ten days they were snow-bound in the midst of an endless, bleak, white desert, until men with dog teams and a giant tractor from Churchill brought help, and an army of workmen cut away the hard-packed snow to free the

hospital special from the Barren-lands' icy grip. That, of the fever stricken fourteen, only one man failed to survive the experience is a lasting tribute to the coolness, bravery, and sacrifice displayed by this northern nurse in an emergency few would care to face.

With the eyes of the world centered on steel's race to Churchill, and the general public ready to howl at the least sign of failure, this blizzard and typhoid epidemic was a tough break for the men in charge of construction. At once the new road came in for added criticism, and dire calamities were prophesied. The fact that such a blizzard had not previously been experienced by the oldest-timers was overlooked.

The blizzard cost ten good days, and the epidemic threatened a complete disorganization; but with those still on the job working day and night to fill the gaps, supplies, equipment, and materials were safely set down at the terminus and at chosen intermediate working points. The courage of men who refused to be beaten had won through, and the winter's program was pronounced complete.

But the big gamble was yet to come. Even while they battled and cursed the cold and frost, the engineers realized that on that same frost depended the whole success of the project, not only in winter but in the summer months to follow.

The Barrens, exclusive of the shallow lakes, are covered by a mat of stiff gray "caribou moss." Under this wiry growth there occurs a brown, multilayered peat, believed to be the vegetation that has accumulated in the past few million years. In summer this deposit, although insulated by the moss, will partially thaw under the hot rays and long working hours of a northern sun. Still farther down, at varying depths, there occurs the formation on which the success or failure of the Barren-lands project hinged — and still hinges—the solid, blue, glacial ice that, undisturbed through the ages, covers the country like a foundation of rock.

Ice for Roadbed

The proposition boils down to this. If by the use of natural and man-devised insulation this glacial ice can be kept from thawing, the Hudson Bay Railway has the solidest roadbed in the world. But if, on the contrary, the heat conduction of a gravel grade proves great enough to pierce that insulation and allow the glacial ice to thaw—well, it's going to be just too bad!

The distance of this blue ice from the surface varies. Usually the frost line in the peat is struck long before the actual ice, but in places it is not hard to find. I know a chap who, after hunting futilely for days, at last found this rock-bottom. Although he didn't see it, he felt it; and lucky for him he did

It was the end of June. With this young New York explorer-journalist I had made a trip to Churchill, and we were returning with a gang of out-going whoopee makers on a tiny gas car. My friend had delved in vain for a sight of the glacial blue, and at last had given up the hunt.

One evening, arriving at Mile 466 where there was a pit spur, we were held up by a dead gravel drag. One of the boys who had a shotgun unlimbered it and began pecking away at the ducks on a sloppy looking Barren-lands pothole. He knocked down a pair near the slough edge, and the New Yorker, clad, among other things, in knee boots and armed with a pole for

sounding purposes, started out to retrieve them.

Underneath a ten inch layer of slimy muck was the old winter ice, which for fifty feet made good walking. But suddenly there was a loud plop!—and the explorer disappeared to his shoulders. For a moment, immersed in the icy slime, he scrambled frantically.

Crossing a Freshet, Ten Feet Deep, in July. A Month Later This Was Bridged and Filled

Then, as we grabbed poles that were being used for ballast, and rushed to the rescue, he began to jump up and down and shout. "Got it!" he yelled. "Ice as solid as rock, down below. Feels like concrete, and being under this water it sure must be blue!"

Anyway, he was. I haven't a photo of him—he snitched the negative—but he was a sorry looking sight, and by the time he stripped and changed in the chill Barren-lands breeze he resembled a piece of glacial ice himself.

On that trip we had a chance to see some of the obstacles to be overcome, during the summer, by the builders. At that time it was a hopeless looking shambles.

Going north from The Pas we had grabbed the bi-weekly mixed, officially named "The Muskeg," and settled ourselves and junk in one of the wooden bunks of a colonist coach. The first night was spent at Mile 137, where there is a roundhouse and the train stops for 12 hours. Everyone, and there were plenty, slept on the train. The crew had their caboose on behind. The second night was spent at 327, and the third at the official end of steel, Mile 412, where a negro runs a laundry in a pair of packing cases, and Luke Clemens, nephew of Mark Twain, runs a trading store.

On to Churchill

Beyond this point laymen are not allowed to travel until next summer. How we got by is a long story, but next

morning we breakfasted at Mile 445 and headed on over the wilderness of bog along the ladder of naked ties and steel toward Churchill-On-The-Chuck.

It was late June, but the atmosphere was chill. There was still ice in the larger of the Barren-lands lakes, and along the snow fences at certain points we saw brick-hard snowdrifts that would easily bear the weight of a man on foot, remnant of the spring blizzard. Reaching to the horizon on all sides was the same monotonous, level plain. Ahead stretched the picket-fence railroad, flopped down on the soggy muskeg, dipping through hollows, floating on the surface of lakes and streams, crowded and buckled into "S" shaped sun kinks where insufficient allowance had been made for expansion caused by frost leaving and heat entering the rails.

Never had steel been laid under similar conditions, and for the men in charge there were numerous local problems to be worked out. Allowance for steel expansion had been carefully figured, but it had proven inadequate. All along rails had to be cut and the line straightened. The whole track structure having kinked without affecting the gauge, gas cars were able to follow it.

Along the right of way ran a true line of tripod telegraph poles—another Canadian National innovation. Being unable at any time to sink poles on account of the underlying ice, the engineering department devised the tripod. With the legs wired at the base, it stands solidly on its feet in any weather.

Between Mile 412 and Mile 507, adjacent to Churchill, there is but one gravel deposit—in the vicinity of 466. Located eight miles off the main stem, on what was at one time the shore of Hudson Bay, this pit had to be tapped by a spur. The interlying territory was bog, and even without a single derailment it took ten days to get a shovel over the eight mile stretch.

As the frost left the ground-surface a ditching program was begun over a plain where three miles of ditching was required for every mile of road. On account of the ice beneath there was no particular water level. In a mile stretch there might be a dozen fairly extensive but vastly different water levels. Then, the surface thawed slowly, and it was necessary to go over the same ground again and again, taking off a few inches at a time as the frost left it. Enough muck was moved during ditching operations to have built the whole grade, had it been suitable material. The ditching end of the job was slow work, but it got results. By August the roadbed was dry beyond the fondest hopes of the builders.

Before the track could be ballasted, there was much bridging and culvert work to be done. Because of frost and treacherous bottom, steel or concrete could not be used. Culverts, said to be the strongest known, were constructed of 12 by 12 cedar logs which gave ample room for drainage.

Altogether, the task that faced the construction men after break-up was a tremendous one. Many critics candidly stated that completion of the road was impossible. It looked that way. During our trip by gas car we crossed a hundred places where the car was supported only by the floating ties and binding rails. We poled it along the twin ribbons of steel balanced over ten feet of swirling, ice-cold river current for distances of 100 yards. At one spot it was necessary to ferry the gas car across the river by freighter canoe. We

reached Canada's new seaport in the midst of a chill, depressing rain.

There on the shores of Hudson Bay was a government harbor works construction outfit of 500 men, the railway terminal camp, a government radio station, dredges, ships, floating ice, diving seals, and schools of white whales playing tag in the harbor.

A Schooner Rests at the End of the Farthest North Rails

Planting the Ballast

Gravel was being blasted from the still-frozen pits and ballasting had begun. Painfully slow the procedure looked to us then. Before the gravel was dumped the skeleton track was raised and a foundation of poles and brush placed under it to carry the gravel trains, and later act as insulation. Then, gravel was dumped, gangs spread it evenly over ties and rails, great jacks were used to raise a section of the track, the gravel was pushed down between the ties, and when lowered, that section of new railway rode on the first lift of a firm gravel foundation.

Brush was obtainable only from a strip of light timber a few miles before reaching the coast. For insulating and stabilizing the line over the great treeless plain, native timber was hauled as far as 100 miles. From Mile 356 to the end of steel at Mile 510, this brushing was done.

Working gangs lived in isolated bunk cars, side-tracked at chosen points before break-up. As the frost left the ground-surface the country was a vast bog. Stepping from the ties meant being knee deep in muck. Where ever necessary duck-boards, a la France, and war days, were used. On the worst part of the line 30 miles of these portable sidewalks were put down. In winter the handy eight-foot sections are erected as snow fences.

The lives of these isolated men were full of monotony, but with the twenty to twenty-two hours of daylight prevalent during the northern summer, long working hours and good stakes were possible and they didn't complain. Every gang had supplies to last months, while any shortage, or emergency, was looked after by gas cars hauling trailers. Later, as the road was improved, these cars were displaced by rail motor trucks with a capacity of thirty men, or several tons of freight.

When, on July 1st, we came back over the sprawling, twisty, Barrenlands line there was little sign of bridging, draining, or ballasting for a hundred miles. With the summer half gone, the rivers unbridged, and trains faced with a long gravel haul, completion of the season's program was beyond the imagination of any one except possibly a poppy smoker, or a Canadian National engineer.

No one knows how they accomplished it, but the fact remains that long before freeze-up the treacherous rivers were bridged, sink-holes were beaten, the whole line was ballasted, and heavy trains were steaming on a solid roadbed, over "the world's greatest continuous swamp" into Churchill.

Again the impossible has been proved possible, and Western Canada has a new outlet to the sea that cuts a cool thousand miles off her grain rail-haul. Regarding port facilities and navigation, there are still many tough conundrums for harbor and marine men to solve. We'll leave them to it.

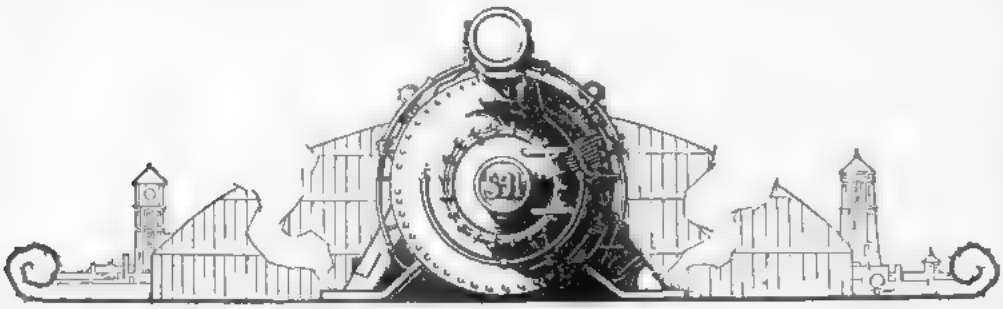
The railroad planning engineers have fulfilled their share of the bargain. In the face of overwhelming odds and a storm of criticism they have put steel into Churchill. To these engineering forces great credit is due for initiative shown, and the application of revolutionary methods that solved a tough problem.

But—with all their new ideas and up-to-date equipment the engineering forces must surely have failed without the dogged tenacity, indomitable spirit, and hearty coöperation of their greatest ally — the never-changing, hard-boiled, fire-eating railroad construction man.

PARADE OF EQUIPMENT

AMERICAN railways during the past seven years have retired enough equipment to make a train 5,700 miles long, according to an editorial in the *Erie Railroad Magazine*. The editorial goes on to say that the new locomotives, freight cars, and passenger cars installed in service in the same period would make a train 7,342 miles in length. Included in this 7,342-mile train of new rolling stock and motive power would be 237 miles of locomotives, 6,851 miles of freight cars and 254 miles of passenger train cars. In other words, if laid on a straight line, this train would reach from New York to Jacksonville, then to Los Angeles, then to Seattle, then to New Orleans and back to Boston. Supposing the train were in motion, the last car in it would just be leaving New York when the first engine arrived in Boston.

An increase of 20 per cent in the power of freight locomotives in service is shown from the period 1921 to 1928, while an 8 per cent increase is shown in the capacity of the average freight car.



"There Came the Distant Tolling of a Locomotive Bell"

The Ghost Bell

It Tolled Fear of Death and Disaster Into Calloused Hearts, But It Didn't Scare the Kid

By W. E. Deaton

"GOLLY!" Jan exclaimed half aloud as a rumbling, black monster dragging a train of eighty gondolas cut off his retreat, and a score of fierce little yard engines kept the tracks in front of him in constant use.

"Golly!" he repeated. "I shore got to git to that caboose, but blame if I see how."

A moment later a break came on the first track. Jan sped across, climbed between two box cars, and stood motionless and terrified as a string of empties shot by at high speed. He wiped a hot and sticky forehead, summoned his courage anew, rushed forward as the empties passed, ducked a shunted box, rolled under a bad-repair car, and climbed, triumphant and breathless, to the platform of the red caboose.

A burly brakeman who had been leaning against the other side of the car called sharply: "Git out o' there!"

"I got to go in here."

The brakeman ran insolent eyes over Jan's clay-spattered boots, his gray lumber shirt, his black soft hat, and waved him away carelessly. "You ain't got business in that car, kid."

"I aims to see Superintendent Stengle—he's in there, ain't he?"

"He is. But he ain't to be bothered. You go up to his office an' wait."

The youth shook his head. "I reckon I better talk to him now. I—I'm scairt to put it off"

"What you want of him, huh?"

Jan hesitated; then: "For to put me on the railroad."

"Ha! Fine chance a hill-billy like you's got! An' if there was any chance, you picked the wrong time. Stengle's in there, madder'n snakes, givin' good railroaders fireworks. He'd bite your head off, did you butt in!"

"Mister—I jest got to go in." The grim determination came back to Jan's face, and before the brakeman could interfere, he pushed open the door.

Four pairs of angry eyes glared up at him. Stengle's big, bloated face was red with rage; the master mechanic was holding himself in check; Old Man H., a locomotive engineer of twenty years' standing, was dazed by unexpected insults; while Red Dover, his conductor, was biting his pipe stem to control the words that begged utterance

"What do you want?" Stengle snapped.

"I—I—Mr. Stengle, I come all the way from Steeple fer to ask you to let me j'ine up with the railroad."

Stengle cursed him in no uncertain terms, and Red, with sudden intuition, jumped up. "Forget it, son; he didn't mean what you think. I don't believe there's any chance of you getting a job here. You'd better beat it."

The determination shone again in the boy's face. "Mr. Stengle, I—I jest got to have a job with the railroad! I—I'll do anything fer to get on."

Stengle snarled again, and Red pulled the youth from the caboose to the platform outside. "Listen, son; this ain't no time to—"

"Mister—I'd kill anybody else what called me what he did, but I made up my mind an' I'm goin' t' make him give me a job or—"

Red chuckled. "There's other ways, buddy. Looks like you got more spunk than I've seen in a long time. Tell you what; you hang around till he goes away, then me an' you'll talk it over."

Stengle called Red, and Jan dropped to the platform step, leaned against the car, weary from his journey, from hunger and disappointment.

Red reëntered the caboose, dropped into his seat, and deliberately lit his pipe.

"Let me tell you," Stengle thundered, "two weeks ago I was boss of the Seventh Division—"

"But that ain't the Mountain Division," Old Man H. said unhappily.

"It's a sight better division! And I've taken trains, myself, from one end to the other, at seventy miles an hour; while you, you sugar rags, can't make schedule at thirty!"

The master mechanic essayed a feeble defense of his friend: "Old Man H. knows the line and equipment better than any other man we have, sir. I guess—"

"I don't want any guessing! In the two weeks I've been here on this division my desk has been covered with reports of trains stuck, late, delayed, wrecked! And Old Man H. is the worst of the whole crew!"

"This is a dangerous division, sir,"

the master mechanic added hurriedly; "it is—"

"No more than any other!" Stengle glared across the service-scarred table. "Out on the seventh we ran trains on twice your time. And say! What is this business about a bell being to blame? I'm getting tired of picking up reports reading that 'McGinnis, late at Griffon, due to proceeding at slow speed after hearing bell.' And last week Old Man H. here reports that, due to hearing bell, he applied brakes abruptly, breaking train and derailing two cars. Day after day it's the same proposition—trains late, or damaged, or wrecked, and always that confounded bell is supposed to be to blame! What is this bell business?"

"It's bad business, sir." The master mechanic's attempt to joke fell flat.

"I don't think it's the bell," Stengle said curtly. "I think we've got a bunch of yellow enginemen!"

Old Man H. groaned. "I never calc'lated I'd be called yellow. But that bell—that everlasting bell—"

"What bell?"

Old Man H. hesitated, and Red cut it curtly: "It's sort of history, sir, along the division, that the first real locomotive on the line, back in the forties or fifties, had a bell cast in Switzerland with seven gold dollars in the metal. The old-timers swear this bell had a tone never equalled since, and could be heard for the Lord knows how many miles. Also, it was supposed to bring luck. Anyway, it never was in a wreck during forty-odd years."

"Where is this bell?"

"The company sold old No. 1 to a logging railroad which used it to hit our line at Steeple. 'Cording to the tale, the first time it ran on their tracks it plunged through a light bridge and dived in the only deep water in these parts. Supposed still to be rottin' in twenty feet of water. Killed both men in the cab. The old-timers say it hoodooed the lumber road, because we never should have let it leave our division. In fact, No. 1 is still ha'nting the line, and after each wreck somebody remembers having heard her bell the night before."

The master mechanic nodded as Red finished.

"We've just had some ghastly accidents, and I'm beginning to feel like most of the boys—that a worse one's on the way. I wake up at night all sweaty from having dreamed—"

"Bah!" The superintendent jumped up. "You and your gang of old maids! Red, what have you to say about this foolishness?"

"I'd take an oath I heard the bell, just last night!"

The big boss walked to the door, and when he returned he seemed to have mastered his anger.

"Look here!" he began. "We're all intelligent men and know there's nothing in this superstition bunk—"

"What's that on your watch chain?" Red interrupted mildly.

"Why—" The superintendent fingered his gold-mounted rabbit's foot, then laughed mirthlessly. "All right—but let's talk this over seriously. The college sharks have it figured out that if a man thinks a thing is so, he helps to make it so. If our men keep thinking wrecks are going to happen, they'll help 'em to happen. If we start thinking this is a safe, comfortable division, we'll start making it such. Now, to get down to brass tacks—if the men think that hearing that bell brings wrecks, or that if we had the bell back the wrecks would stop, why—" He left the sentence unfinished.

"You mean"—the master mechanic leaned forward excitedly—"we'll send out and get that bell?"

"Or a bell of some kind. None of the boys could tell the difference."

Old Man H. shook his head sharply, and the master mechanic protested: "Oh, if we faked it, that would bring worse luck!"

"I thought sailors were superstitious, but it looks like railroaders are fifty times worse!" the superintendent said angrily. "But—"

Stengle jumped to his feet.

"I've tried to put this up to you men on a fair basis," he shouted. "Now I'll start being hard. Listen! I'm holding you to the last word of your job! Any more of this bell stuff, or old women's superstitions, and there'll be a flock of new faces on the line! And furthermore, Old Man H. goes on the dump the next time he sticks another train or pulls in late without due cause! I'll show you how to run a division or get some real men in here!"

He picked up his hat and stalked to the door.

"Bells! Ghosts! Superstitions!" he snarled. "Why, confound it, I could run a train from Kimmel to Griffon at top speed with a million bells ringing!"

The master mechanic waited until Stengle had dropped off the car.

"Boys," he said earnestly, "if you ever did railroad, do it now! If anything happens, I can't save you with that crab like he is. Be careful, but run like wildfire!" Old Man H. snapped his watch cover.

"It's all my fault, Red," he said gloomily. "I know I been slow, but—that bells keeps a ringin'—a ringin'—till I know my time's come!" Dejectedly he made his way out, leaving Red drawing on an empty pipe.

A little later the big conductor roused himself and went out on the platform. Jan was asleep, propped up against the caboose. Red shook his shoulder gently. "Buddy, wake up!"

"Yessuh! Did you fix it so I could git a job?"

"I'm afraid not."

Bitter dejection showed in his eyes. Then: "I aims to ask if you think if I went down to Griffon, could I join on thar?"

Red shook his head, but a glint of deep earnestness kept him from smiling. "I'm sorry, buddy, but I can't hold out much hope. In fact, I'm just about certain you couldn't get a railroad job in Griffon."

"Oh—" the youth said blankly. "I—I aims to say—much obliged jest the same. I—I shore do wish I could—"

Red sensed his keen disappointment.

"You might," he explained, "get a job at the peach packing house. Somebody told me they were puttin' on men sortin' fruit."

"No— No, I reckon I don't want a job like that."

"Wait a minute," Red called as the boy turned away. "What makes you so anxious to railroad?"

"Ever since I were born I liked trains. My pappy done beat me many a time fer runnin' down to Steeple fer to watch 'em."

"How you gonna get back to Steeple?"

The mountain lad looked confused.

"I—I wuz so plumb shore I'd git a job—I didn't calc'late on money fer to git home— But, I'm purty fair of a walker."

Red pointed to the caboose.

"Climb in there quick. This is gonna be one hot day, an' Steeple is too far to be walked."

"Gollyday, suh! I shore am under all kinds o'—"

The big conductor waved aside the thanks with a grin.

"Get in there an' keep quiet till I get this train rollin'."

II

Fast freight No. 38 came to a full stop just west of the limits of Steeple; a trainman dropped from the locomotive, got the switch, and 38 rattled ponderously over the frogs and down the long siding.

An operator from the station hopped the engine, swung up into the cab, and, grinning, handed the engineer a flimsy order sheet.

Old Man H. read the lines hurriedly, grunted with bitter intensity, then passed the paper to his fireman, who paused wearily to wipe a wet brow before taking it.

"Been expecting it!" he said in a dull voice. "Every dog-gone time I get a party framed up, some swab has to try to tear up the whole division!"

"So, we'll set here in the sun all day, h-m?" Old Man H. spoke without moving his eyes from the rails ahead. "And me scheduled for a lodge election! If some brother don't blackball that—" He left his threat unfinished and looked thoughtful.

The operator chuckled and prepared to drop off as the engine neared the passenger platform.

"Don't cuss Sweeny too hard," he said; "he probably stuck you here for a good twelve hours, but he messed himself up more'n the main line, and we just heard he'd chipped in, raving 'bout the bell ha'nting him."

Neither the Old Man nor his fireman spoke, but both looked up with grave interest, and the old man shook his head sadly. A moment later he brought his train to a stop, took off his ragged, greasy gloves, placed them on the cushion and climbed down.

"Watch 'er close, son," he ordered; "I'm goin' back to tell Red 'bout Sweeny, an' try to git cool a little bit."

Still shaking his head and grumbling occasionally to himself, the old man made his way down the train to the caboose.

The little car was quiet when the Old Man entered. Dopey, the brakeman, was asleep in the cupola, a newspaper over his face; the flagman had one shoe off and was trying to tie the end of a gray sock with a piece of string to keep his toes from sticking through. Old Man H. went to the cooler on top of the car stove and filled the tin dipper with ice water.

"Where's Red?" he asked.

"We matched—an' he lost," the flagman grinned. "Had to go up to Tilligan's store an' buy two bottles of pop for each of us."

The big conductor climbed up on the platform at this moment and stamped into the car.

"Here—" He dumped two frosted bottles into the flagman's lap. "Howdy!" He handed the Old Man a bottle. "Dopey'll only get one. By rights I ought to pull him out o' there and— Him an' me framed up to stick the flagman, but Dopey, bein' so dumb, messed it up and sticks me—but I'll get both of them before long!"

"I ain't so dumb!" Dopey pulled the paper off his face and grinned evilly. "I told you if you made me walk back to see if I'd closed that switch at Jumpers I'd get even—"

Red mumbled some profanity about double crossers, dropped into his seat and started filling his pipe.

"They tell me we're stuck here for twelve hours."

The Old Man finished his bottle with a grunt.

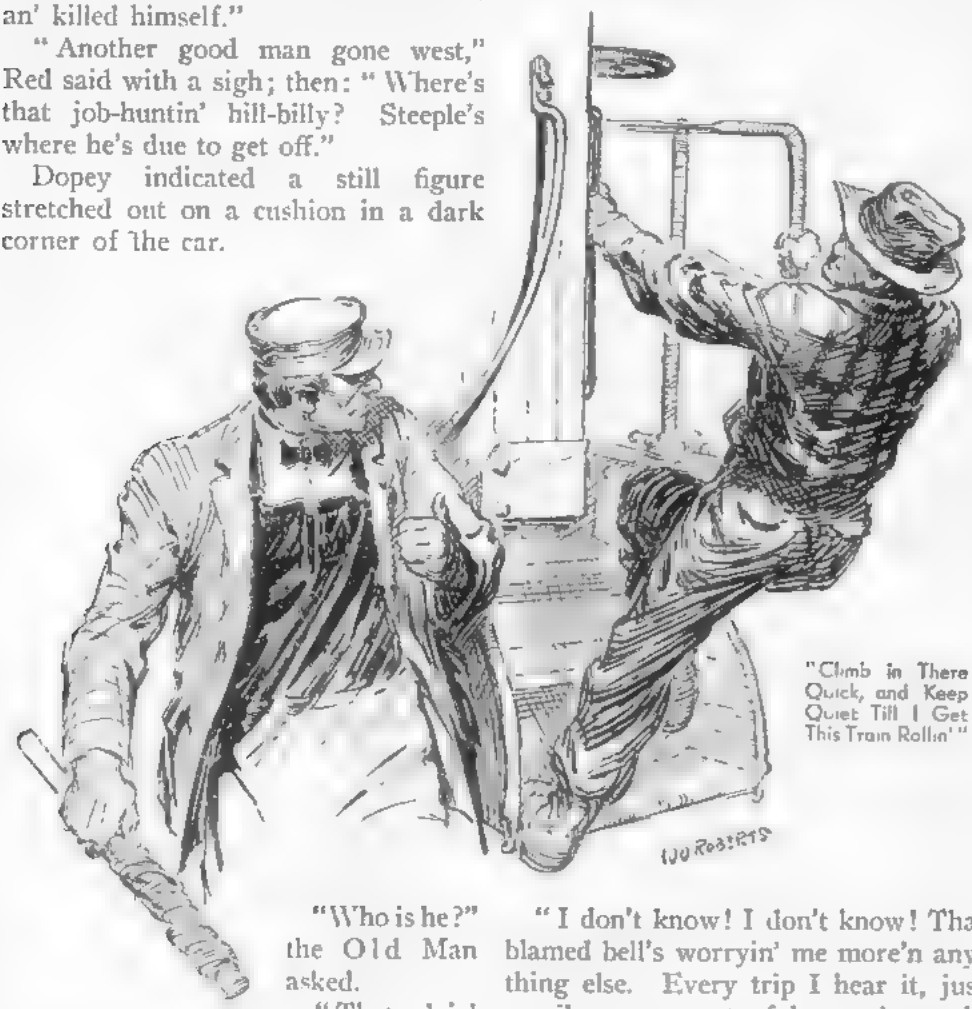
"That bell got another man, Red!" He shook his head dolefully. "Sweeny put No. 10 in the ditch early this morning, blocked the main line for hours, an' killed himself."

"Another good man gone west," Red said with a sigh; then: "Where's that job-huntin' hill-billy? Steeple's where he's due to get off."

Dopey indicated a still figure stretched out on a cushion in a dark corner of the car.

"this here line's gittin' too dangerous to operate over."

"Just keep a stiff upper lip, old-timer," said Red. "Me and you wasn't made to pass out on this division."



"Climb in There Quick, and Keep Quiet Till I Get This Train Rollin'"

"Who is he?" the Old Man asked.

"That kid who busted in this mornin' lookin' for a job."

Red went over and shook the boy. "Get up, buddy; you're home."

"This here Steeple?" Jan was wide awake instantly. "I—I ain't 'zackly home; I live a couple miles up the valley."

"Red," Old Man H. interrupted, "I don't know! I don't know! That blamed bell's worryin' me more'n anything else. Every trip I hear it, just a mile or so west of here, always in the same place. Looks like—"

III

RED groaned inwardly. With Old Man H. in this mood No. 38 would never pull in on time, and the phantom bell would have driven another good man from the railroad.

Jan, noting that the conductor was

occupied in thought, made his way to the door, raised his hand in a silent gesture of thanks and good-by, and started out.

"Wait a minute," Red called suddenly; "I'll walk as far as the depot with you."

The two dropped off the car and walked along the train. Red finally broke the silence. "What's your name, buddy?"

"Janifrey Linthicum."

"That's some name. Look here, Jan; I've just had a hunch. A boy of your age and lack of schooling would almost never get a job railroading. However, if you can do one thing for me, I'll guarantee to take you up to the superintendent's office and get you a job."

"Golly!" The dejected look on the boy's face vanished. "I'll shore try, Mr. Dover. Maybe—maybe—I could git a job on the same train with you?"

"Maybe. Did you ever hear of the Mississippi Log and Lumber Company's railroad?"

"Shore! Used to run from here cl'ar up Hootown Valley. Been tore up sence I was knee high to nothin'."

"That's right." The trainman nodded. "Do you know where it used to cross a deep creek?"

Jan reflected. "I reckon I know 'bout whar 'twas."

"Now listen close! Years ago an engine jumped the track there and fell in the water. The engine had a bell I want. Do you think you could go get that bell? The day you bring it to me, I'll guarantee to put you on the railroad's pay roll."

"I reckon I can shore try. Say, I heard them fellers say you all wuz goin' t' be here all day?"

"Yep."

"Well, maybe I can tote the bell over here to-night an' git fixed up tomorrow?" There was an anxious, excited look in the boy's eyes.

"It 'll be a hard job getting that bell," Red cautioned. "It's probably buried in the sand or mud—"

"Mister"—there was deadly earnestness—"I'll bust a lung tryin' fer that job. Ever sence I been born I been hankerin' fer to j'ine up with the railroad, an' if that there bell is in them hills, you shore will have it."

"Good! What's that you're carrying?"

Jan displayed two fusees. "Flagman on the caboose give 'em to me. I saw one last night—first time I ever seed red fire, an' folks up my way will be tall s'prised when I light these. Yessuh!"

"Good luck, Jan. I'm hoping as much as you are that you'll find the bell and get a job with the company."

"Much obliged to ye, Mr. Dover, an' fer the ride. I—I hopes to repay yo' favor."

Red watched as Jan set off at a rapid pace. Once again in his native environment the boy's awkwardness fell away and he covered distance with incredible speed.

Red sat down on the edge of the cinder platform and lit his pipe. There was little short of a prayer in his heart that success might crown his effort to save Old Man H. from the disgrace of discharge, and—

"More'n one man 'll railroad better if I can put that bell to ringing on the division," he told himself. Then, "That cursed Stengle!"

Jan took the main road through the little settlement of Steeple. A short way out of town his eye caught the faint marks of an almost obliterated right of way which crossed the road here. The rail had been removed, and

many years of sun and rain had broken down the ballast and rotted the ties, but still the roadbed of the former railroad could be distinguished. Countless stumps marked the past ravages of the lumber company, but a lusty growth of scrub pine had sprung up and pressed close to the abandoned roadbed, which led upward, with many curves, toward the nearest hill to the west.

Leaving the highway, Jan followed the fill, and a half hour's climb brought him to the brow of the hill, where he turned to look back. Steeple was a mere speck on the landscape, and only a thin line of blue smoke marked train No. 38 on the siding.

"Reckon I got to hustle," he told himself with a quick squint upward. "Ole sun says she's gittin' almost noon."

The going became more difficult now; time after time he was tripped by decaying ties crumbling under his feet; briers caught at him; pokeberry bushes slapped his face, and once he jumped aside only in time to avoid stepping upon a coiled snake. A little later he was forced to detour for a water tank which had fallen across the way, and came upon the scene of the No. 1 disaster unexpectedly. A tangle of young trees revealed the creek, and three lonesome piles standing in the water gave mute testimony of the fallen trestle.

Jan slid down the bank and walked up the narrow rocky shore, trying to estimate the point at which the break occurred, gazing into the water, which, fortunately, possessed the usual clearness of mountain streams. The creek was nearly ninety feet wide at this point, and he finally decided that the locomotive had gone down too far out to be visible from shore.

"Reckon thar ain't no way," he grumbled, "'thout swimmin' out an' lookin' straight down."

He divested himself of his clothes, picked his way carefully across the bowlder-lined shore, shivered at the icy shock of the water, knelt and bathed his chest to prevent cramps, then plunged in.

Wrapping his long legs around the center pile, he flattened out to stare down into the water. A cloud passed from over the sun and he gained a moment of clear vision which revealed the bottom apparently sandy and clear of any large object.

"Bell," he muttered, "you jest got to be thar! Le's see. Crick flows thataway. Sand would kiver up an' bank on that side. Well, here goes!"

He shoved off from the pile, lifted his legs, and, swimming a hurried breast stroke, plunged down and down. At the moment when he feared he would never touch bottom, his hand struck the sand. He opened his eyes and strained to see through the blur of the water. His ears shrilled under the pressure, and he must swim steadily to remain down and in position. He worked across the deep current-cut channel, then suddenly pushed himself toward the surface as the air in his lungs gave out.

On the surface he swam to the pile and held there, panting, for several seconds.

"She ain't on that side, shore," he told himself, "an' if she'd a fell off'n that side, them piles would 'a' been broke. Now jest whar could she be?"

He swam ashore and, with an instinct developed by hill life, tried to reason the natural forces that had been at play.

"I wonder," he mused, "jest why the channel is so close to yon shore an'

not in the middle like? Gollyday!" he snorted disgustedly. "Dad would shore whup me if he knowed how dumb I been! Co'se that's the reason! That there engine blocked the old channel, an' river dug herself another'n. Right this side o' deep water's whar she is!"

He pushed off and plunged down again through the clear green water. This time his hand met sand in about six feet of water, and a moment later he was on the surface chuckling with delight.

"Yessuh," he announced, "should 'a' knowed it all the time. Right here's her b'iler, shore as shootin'. Gollyday, I hope she's right side up!"

He elevated his feet and shot down again.

He found a spot cleared of the sand, and followed it to an abrupt stop. He dug frantically in an effort to determine if this was the cab end or the front of the locomotive, but was forced to come to the surface again before he could be sure.

Down he went again, felt his way to the other end of the boiler, and this time satisfied himself it was the front. Just before he came up, however, his hand felt a ragged steel bar standing upright from the boiler, and he came up with a sudden fear.

"Shore do look," he muttered, "like she's flat on her back. I know thar ain't no bar like that stickin' up on top o' ary engine."

Five minutes later he was sitting on the bank, his hopes blasted by the positive knowledge that the boiler was upside down, and that the bell, if it still remained, was buried far below the mass of rusted steel. Nothing short of a steam shovel could remove the sand to a sufficient depth to reach the bell.

He started to put on his clothes, but by the time he had drawn on his pants his misery got the better of him and he dropped back on a rotten log and gave way to depression.

It was cool under the trees where Jan was sitting, but the red clay in the opposite bank was hot, and the tangle of vines above were dusty and dry. A catbird fluttered down the wind, perched, swaying perilously, in a scrub pine and screeched sharply.

"Go ahead!" Jan muttered dolefully. "Rub it in, you ol' gossiper! Yep, I'm still a hill-billy an' always will be, now. Done had my chance, but luck were ag'in' me—or mebby I jest wasn't big enough!" He sighed deeply, then suddenly straightened up. "Nawsuh, I ain't admittin' I'm beat! I'm a goin' t' set right here till I figger some way to turn that thar b'iler over!"

A shower of pebbles rolling down the cliff on the other side of the creek brought his attention to a grinning pickaninny staring down at him.

"Yi, yi, yi," laughed the little negro. "Dey done got hyar 'fore you— My pappy, he he'p 'um."

"Help 'em to do what?" Jan demanded with sudden interest.

"Dey fish up dem wheels an' drag 'em away."

"How long 'go?"

The little boy did not know. Maybe one, two, three, four years—before he was born, he finally admitted, but he had heard pappy tell of it lots of times.

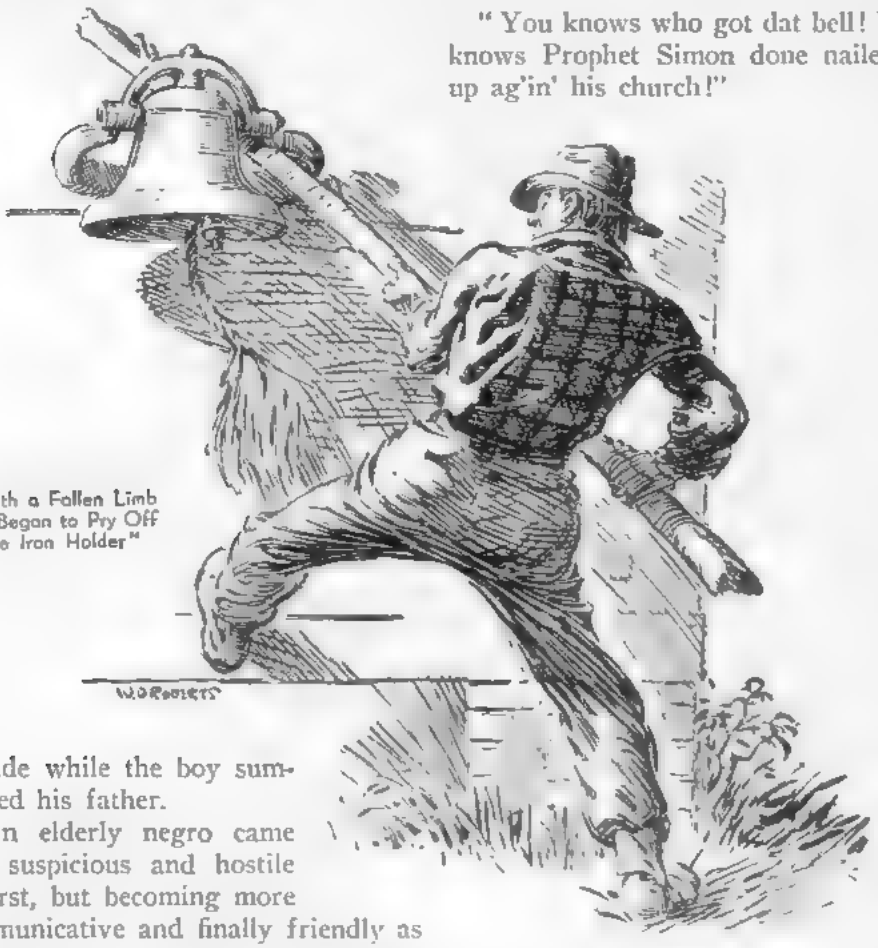
"Where you live?" Jan demanded. "Is your pappy to home?"

The pickaninny nodded and pointed up the hill. "Jes' over in Hootown Valley."

Jan finished dressing hurriedly. The youngster told him there was a place a little ways down where the water was shallow and he could cross on stepping

stones. Fifteen minutes later they were climbing the hill.

A few acres of half tilled land surrounded the snake-rail fence which encircled the little cabin, and Jan waited outside while the boy summoned his father.



"With a Fallen Limb He Began to Pry Off the Iron Holder"

An elderly negro came out, suspicious and hostile at first, but becoming more communicative and finally friendly as Jan spoke in the homely dialect of the back hills.

The old man remembered the event clearly. He had assisted in the operation of stripping the locomotive. It must have been ten years ago.

Finally Jan came to the matter of vital interest. "Did you see — now, maybe—a bell? Who tooken that?"

The negro shook his head and turned away as if considering the conversation closed. Jan's heart sank, and he regretted that he had allowed the pickaninny's remark to renew his hope.

Then a colored woman came to the door of the cabin and called to the man.

"You knows who got dat bell! You knows Prophet Simon done nailed it up ag'in' his church!"

Quickly the man turned to Jan.

"Dat's de truf, boss; but please, suh, don't you say nuffin' to dem folks 'bout us'n tellin' you. We-all ain't s'posed to know nuffin' 'bout dat bell."

"Won't say a word," Jan promised. "Whar is this here church? What makes you-all so skeered of 'em?"

"Dey bad folks," he answered in a whisper. "Dey mebby calls it religion, but dat ain't what Ah calls it! Ef you

goes dere you suttenly wants to look out for dat prophet. He wouldn't no mo' fink o' shootin' you dan he would o' breathin'!"

"How much you charge to show me the way an' help me tote the bell away?" Jan asked.

The old man raised his hands in horror, but eventually, under the stress of Jan's promise to give him a whole dollar, he agreed to go as far as the turn in the road and wait there until Jan returned.

"Nawsuh! Ah ain't goin' no nigher'n dat! Dem folks ain't got no scruples at all. Come on, boss; we goes disaway."

IV

THE sun was approaching the horizon and Jan wasted no further time in talk. He knew that frequently backhill communities go "bad," usually on the subject of religion—grow to regard all strangers as creatures of the devil. Nevertheless, Jan urged his companion to greater speed along the faint wagon road that led up the valley.

They covered three miles in very nearly a half hour, and a sudden turn in the road gave them a view of the little settlement a mile or more beyond, snuggled closely among the hills.

For a brief minute the dying sun bathed the whitewashed church building in radiance, then dropped below the line of hills, and a flood of purple shadow filled Hootown Valley.

At that moment Jan stopped in his tracks and looked around in amazement, for a bell seemed to be ringing right beside him. It took a real effort to realize that the bell was on the distant church, and for the first time Jan was positive he was nearing his goal.

"Golly!" he muttered, "ain't that one swell bell! No wonder them railroad fellers want it!"

"Ah waits here, suh," the old man announced; "good luck to you, boss."

Cleared fields lay on both sides of the road as Jan cautiously approached the little settlement. Once a hound ran from a farmhouse and barked furiously, but except for that, no notice was taken of his presence. He concluded rightly that the entire colony had gathered in the church for their evening services.

As he neared the building he left the road and made his way under cover of the trees and bushes. His heart gave a great leap as he perceived the bell shining in the dusk, nailed, as the old negress had said, to the front wall of the church.

"Gollyday!" he muttered, "they shore did spike her on tight! I need an ax for to pull them nails out."

He crept closer until he could peer in an open window. Inside the big barnlike building candles burned waveringly on a rough table which served as an altar. A dozen men and women sat motionless on low pine benches, gazing in sullen fascination at the slow, hypnotic dance of the leader. Long shadows from the candlelight on his whirling white robes suggested unnatural convolutions, and as he whirled, the warm blood from a still twitching chicken was spattered through the darkness.

Jan felt the hair rising on his head, and as he gazed in spellbound horror, the congregation began to chant softly a meaningless jargon over and over. The leader's sway became swifter and the chant increased, the men and women swinging from side to side in unison. Jan found himself impelled to follow the sway and backed away from the window in consternation.

"Plum' loony," he muttered, wiping a damp forehead on his sleeve; "they wouldn't no more listen to ary bargain I might make 'em and—"

There was an excited scream from a woman within the building, and Jan shivered.

"Maybe," he told himself, "I better go back an'—" But he shook his head stubbornly. "Nawsuh! Red's countin' on me to bring this here bell to him, and, by crackey, I'm a gonna do it!"

He stole around to the front, and with a fallen tree limb began prying off the iron holder. The prophet apparently had taken the whole thing—bell and support—from the fallen engine, and the iron framework had been nailed to the wall with six-inch spikes. A frayed cord, tied to the clapper, served to ring it.

"I kin git it off in two minutes, but the noise o' them spikes comin' out shore would wake the dead," Jan muttered. "Looks like I jest got to go in an' bargain with 'em. An' they ain't a gonna listen to me less'n I talk their language—" He stopped and engaged in deep thought. Finally, with reluctant step, he sidled through the door.

In the gloom of the building he was not noticed for a few moments, then a woman near the entrance screamed shrilly.

"Wait, Prophet, wait!"

Immediately the chant stopped. The leader held up his hand and called to Jan.

"What want ye? Air ye of the angels, or air ye of the devils?"

"I've come," Jan answered, "for to git that bell which belongs to the railroad fellers."

"That's a lie!" the woman screeched.

"That be our bell." The prophet glared angrily, and excited murmurs came from the crowd. "You be full of sin for to try to steal from the house of the angels!"

"I be of the angels!" Jan announced with desperate decision. "It don't be good for this church for to have a bell stole from nobody!"

"Yah!" a member of the congregation yelled derisively. "How do we'uns know you ain't of the devils? Prophet says you are maybe a liar, tryin' for to steal from this holy house!"

"He ain't no prophet!" Jan cried angrily, and realized instantly that he had made a mistake.

"Prove it!" The leader's eyes gleamed in fury. "Ye air of the devils! Give us all a sign." His voice lost its uncertain note and became threatening He left his place and strode forward, and simultaneously two other men left their seats and started around the side of the gloomy room toward Jan.

Gosh, he reflected, he'd have to work fast or— What were they asking for—a sign? What kind of a sign could he give them?

"This here man," the prophet suddenly wheeled on his flock, "is a devil himself! The power I got has made me see him in his real skin. He air a devil, and has got two horns a stickin' up out'n his forehead, an' a tail, an' red fire a burnin' from his breath! Us has got to ketch this here devil an' burn him up less'n he drags us down to burn forever with him!"

"Hallaluya!" shrieked an excited follower.

"Burn him!" called an old man. "Glory! Glory! Prophet's right! I do be a seein' them there horns an' tail an' red fire a blazin' myself!"

Jan looked around the shadowy room with sudden fear. The leader and several of his followers were mak-

ing their way toward him with deliberate intent. Suddenly he shivered with joy. He saw a way out!

"You-all listen to me!" he cried, beginning the preparations for the miracle he would show these people. "Listen for—"

He got no further, for he was rudely seized from behind, his arms pinioned to his sides by powerful hands. His captor addressed the preacher over his shoulder:

"I wuz late to meetin', parson, but looks like 'twas all for the best. Who's this man, a breakin' up services?"

"He air king of the devils!" the prophet screamed. "You done won a golden crown, Brother Isaac. Hold him till we git a fire started, an'—"

Cold sweat broke out on Jan's forehead, and he cursed himself for having failed to keep a watch behind. The mountaineers dragged him farther within the room, and every step he took from the door reduced his hope of escape. There was a sudden moment of silence as the leader stopped to plan the execution, and Jan grasped it eagerly.

"Before you-all start," he cried, with the hope of reasoning with his captors, "let me prove I'm a bigger angel than that there feller," pointing to their leader. "Let him do a miracle, then let me; then you decide which air the best angel."

"Close your ears! That there devil will drag you down to burn forever. Don't listen to him." The prophet tried to jump up on one of the rude benches to hold the attention of his flock, but missed his footing and sprawled headlong. The man holding Jan released his grip for a moment, and instantly Jan was away and standing in the doorway.

The startled crowd surged forward to seize him, but he shouted, so suddenly and so queerly, that they stopped in their tracks.

"Yam-a-got!" he cried again. "You-all listen to me! I tol' you I was come peaceful, but you-all don't believe me, so now I got to act rough less'n you-all sizzle! Look!"

With another yell he pulled from his belt the two fusees which the flagman had given him, struck their prepared heads together, and plunged their spikes deep into the wood planking. Both burst into crimson flames, and with screams and shrieks of abject terror the spectators fell back from the door. The red glow spluttered to the utmost corners of the room, and demoniacal shadows danced in the ghastly light until not one of the "angels" doubted but that this terrible stranger had sprouted horns and tail.

"There!" Jan shouted wildly. "That there's your sign! I'm a gonna take your bell, an' the first man that passes these here devil-lights while they're still a burnin' will ketch fire hisself. Don't ary one of you move until I send a wind for to be a puttin' out them lights!"

He dashed out of the church, seized his lever, and had the bell detached in a jiffy. But to his amazement he found that he could barely lift it from the ground, and there was absolutely no chance of carrying it away.

"Gollyday!" he muttered bitterly. "Who in tarnation would have figgered it was too heavy to tote? An' shore as shootin', that prophet will have his gang a chasin' me as soon as them lights goes out. Wonder how long they burns?"

He suddenly remembered his colored friend, and without more thought sprinted down the night-hidden road. The old negro had become curious and

had found his way down the road, near the church.

"Dat you, boss man?" a soft voice called, and Jan drew up, panting. "Git de bell?"

"Here!" He caught the old man's arm. "You gotta go with me an' he'p tote it!"

"Not me, suh! What kind o' shim-a-dilly's goin' on wif all dat red light?"

"Come on! I'll give you two whole dollars, do you he'p me! I got them lights fixed so them folks is scairt to leave."

"I—I—nawsuh, I—"

"Two dollars an' fifty cents! Come on!"

The offer was too much to resist, and the two ran back to where the big bell shone in the darkness. Inside the church they could hear moans and prayers.

"Leave dat bell, boss! Dem folks 'll kill us!"

"Grab a holt!" ordered Jan. "Now!"

They made the best of an awkward load and stumbled frantically down the road until the turn was reached. Jan dropped his end, wiped the perspiration from his eyes and turned to look back.

The red lights were no longer burning in the old church, and a not so distant cry warned him that the pack was in full pursuit.

"Lawdy, boss, leave dat ol' bell an' run! Come on! Dem crazy idgits 'll pull yo' arms an' laigs off, do dey ketch us. Come on!"

"Here! I ain't a gonna leave this here bell! You wanta make your money? Git a stick an' we'll tote 'er together an' I'll give you — I'll raise you to three dollars!"

The old man struggled to escape, but Jan held him until in desperation he raised his end of the bell and together they scrambled down the path, stumbling on in the darkness.

"Hyar!" the old negro whispered. "Mebby us kin fool 'em. We kin turn off hyar an' head fo' de railroad, den walk down de tracks to Steeple—save time. Come on, suh; dem fools is a ketchin' up on us!"

V

THE inmates of the caboose passed a long, hot day on the siding, waiting for the line to be cleared. At sunset the operator came and told them to be ready to pull out by eight. At eight he put the time off another two hours, but brought additional news which made them sit up and take notice.

"The big boss started from Griffon this morning to inspect the scene of the wreck himself. He's had two engine failures, and will pull in here in a little while on a cripple. His car is to be put on your train and you will have the honor of taking him back home."

"Honor!" Dopey swore. "Stengle will be in a frame of mind to fire any —maybe all of us—for nothin' at all!"

Shortly after the superintendent's car arrived and had been coupled to No. 38, Stengle stalked across the platform and into the caboose.

"When can we leave?" he demanded of Red.

"In ten minutes."

"Come with me. I'm going up to the engine! Maybe I can instill into that old hogger enough nerve to railroad properly."

The two made their way up the train and climbed up in the cab. Stengle lost no time in formalities. "Get away from that throttle," he ordered; "I'm running this engine an' I don't want any yellow-streakers in my way!"

Old Man H. fell back and the superintendent slipped into his seat on the right side of the cab. "When a man loses his nerve and gets too thoughtful of his own safety and comfort, he ought to have sense enough to resign."

"I haven't lost my nerve!" Old Man H. protested bitterly. "I've been thinking of loss and damage to the company whenever I ran slow."

"That's what they all say!" There was insult in Stengle's voice, and only the restraining touch of Red's hand kept the old man silent.

At ten o'clock precisely the block signal flashed green, and Stengle carefully released his air, opened the throttle, and No. 38 crept out on the main line.

From time to time the superintendent turned to shout caustic remarks concerning yellow engineers and cowardly railroaders.

"I suppose every time you hear a bell you slow down?" he called above the noises of the engine. And as if in answer to his words, there came the distant tolling of a locomotive bell.

Old Man H. and Red exchanged glances, and Stengle turned with a question written across his features.

"Orders to meet any one?" he asked.

Old Man H. mutely handed him his tissues. The phantom bell grew louder, and Stengle, with a muffled grunt, reduced speed. Old Man H. flashed a triumphant look at Red. Stengle leaned far out the cab window, rounded a curve, and the headlight revealed a long tangent ahead on which no engine was visible, yet the tolling grew louder and louder and louder. Stengle's face paled, and Old Man H.'s sarcastic smile faded.

He whispered to Red: "I never heard it git this close before!"

Beads of moisture appeared on Stengle's brow. His hand swept on the air valve. The bell sounded now as if the approaching train might be within a hundred yards and drifting closer and closer.

"Thought you said you'd run at top speed with a million bells ringin'!" Old Man H. laughed bitterly.

Stengle turned as if to reply, then twirled his brass valve handle to release. But the next moment his nerve deserted him and he swept the air into a heavy service reduction. The same minute Red cried aloud and pointed down the roadway where two figures, in the headlight's glare, could be seen struggling up the fill.

The conductor slipped down from the cab and reached Jan and his companion before they had allowed their heavy burden to drop.

"Jan!" he yelled. "Jan! You got it, boy! You got it!"

"I reckon I did, suh— Gollyday, she shore do weigh heavy!"

"But it's all shiny!" Red cut in, keen disappointment in his voice. "This can't be the bell from the deep river!"

"Yes, it can be!" Stengle elbowed his way into the crowd. "I see the whole thing. This bell has been in regular use somewhere, and either from its remarkable carrying power, or from some valley which brought the sound to the railroad, it has been heard here."

Old Man H., the last to leave the locomotive, caught Red's arm.

"What is it, Red?"

"This—" Red paused impressively, "is the ghost which made you and many another man—including Stengle, here—lose his nerve! This is the bell from that old engine No. 1!"

"*What!*" Old Man H. ran his hands over the polished metal. "It is!

It is, Red! Look—here's the date—1850! Son, I'll give you a hundred—I'll give you a thousand— I'll give—"

"Wait!" Red ordered. "It already belongs to you—I promised this boy a job on the railroad if he got it for me. I guess"—he turned to Stengle—"we can make a brakeman out of him, eh?"

"Honh!" the superintendent grunted. "Maybe. You take charge of him and we'll see.

"I'm sorry I called you yellow," he said to the old engineer.

Jan borrowed the money from Red to pay his negro, and followed the conductor back to the caboose. Dopey, sprawled in the cupola, was finishing a magazine story as they climbed the steps.

"What you doin' back, hill-billy?" he called to Jan.

"I—I—" Jan stammered, but Red cut in curtly:

"Hill-billy nothing! Drag your lazy carcass out of that bunk and take a look at a first-class railroad man!"

A RAILWAY EXECUTIVE'S PHILOSOPHY

CHARLES H. MARKHAM, chairman of the board, and former president of the Illinois Central System, once received a letter from a station agent, H. F. Harris, at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, who wrote: "I am wondering how you attained success. Are there any good railroad books which will help a man to get somewhere?"

Mr. Markham's reply follows:

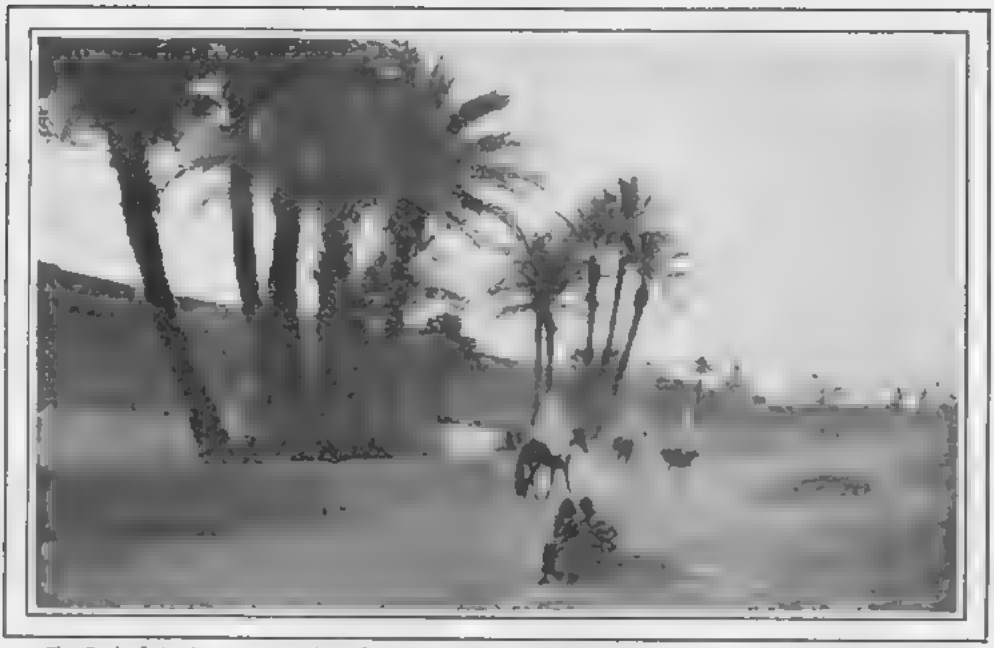
This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 7, and I thank you for the sincerity which is evident between the lines of your inquiry. You ask me to set down in stated rules the secret—as most persons are pleased to call it—of success. I do not believe that any one can reduce the elements of success to a working formula. The rule that applies to me might not apply to you, or to another man. Success is hard to define, difficult of analysis.

I can give rules for conduct, advice which, if conscientiously obeyed, will insure you the honorable career of a respected American citizen. I cannot give you an infallible recipe for happiness, but I can almost tell you where success and happiness may be found The realization that we are doing something worth while comes very near to being the key to happiness. Achievement is another name for success.

I doubt if there are any books the study of which would enable a man to rise from the position of station agent to that of a railway executive. The only school where real knowledge is taught is the school of experience. One rule I have found worth while is this: Whatever you are doing do it well. If you are digging ditches, shoveling coal, keeping books, or sitting at a telegraph key, it is possible to make it a perfect achievement by genuine effort. Don't make the mistake of thinking anything doesn't count Everything counts

The man who tries, the man who knows that his task, no matter how small and inconsequential it may seem, is part of the Big Scheme, the man who believes in himself and is ready for promotion when it comes, will climb as surely as he lives. Do not think that opportunities are no longer present. Fate has a way of opening up opportunities when you least expect them. Study life. Study men. Have a zest for the thing you are doing now, and you need not worry about the future Believe that your chance will come, and it will come Belief in failure invites failure

In a railway organization results are what count. What you do means more than how you do it. If you are getting results you cannot conceal the fact from those above you. Men who get results are in demand. The supply has never yet equaled the demand in that particular market. Cultivate patience that never accepts discouragement or defeat. Remember that there is no excellence without great labor. He who is prepared to wait without complaining until destiny sees fit to reward him sometimes finds the time shorter than he expected. There is some little thing somewhere in every man's life upon which his chance for success depends. It may be so trivial that, at the time, he fails to perceive it. But if he performs that task creditably, the rest unfolds. If that is true we cannot afford to overlook any bets, can we? We must keep a stiff upper lip, and keep hammering.



The End of the Line on the Electrified Road Into the Atlas Mountains, Showing the Pink Mud Walls of the Coney Island of the Desert

Sahara Highball

Over the Burning Desert the White Express Fights the Shifting Dunes Without Rights, Class or Meets

By Ralph Heinzen

IMAGINE a straightaway of one hundred miles without a switch or a siding, a shade-tree or a landmark, only sand and camels and white-robed Arabs, no signals to look out for and no chance of meeting another train because yours is the only rolling stock on the whole heat-bitten pike, and you have an accurate picture of what it means to highball the Sahara

From Biskra, an oasis in the northern confines of the great desert, runs this 100-mile stretch of main line to Touggourt across the shifting sands as far into the dunes as sand and hostile Arabs will permit. It is the farthest the French whites have ever been able to penetrate with the material of civilization

There is no chart of this railroad, for the road is not the same two weeks in succession. When the short rainy period of two weeks comes in January and the torrents dash across the desert gulleys to sink into the earth's interior at some sandy hole, the railroad picks up its tracks and moves

When the siroccos blow in, summer sand from the heart of Africa is picked up and carried through the air, tons of tiny particles finally falling on the right of way, which is often buried under ten feet of the flaky stuff.

The sands of the desert are never still. You have only to look at the skyline to see the earth in movement. Dunes are blown along and another comes to take the place of each one moved. For that reason the roadbeds are never permanent. They are made so that the rails can be dug up or lifted easily. The crossties are steel, not wood. The rails are attached to the ties with metal clamps and a gang of ten men, aided with a torrent of Arabian profanity, can move the whole railroad in a week.

No snowstorm in the Rockies ever tied up a railroad any tighter than the "White Express" is often sanded in. Without warning a dark cloud comes out of the south and the storm breaks. The Arabs and their camels kneel down, one seeking shelter from the other. The Arab's long white smock comes in handy, for he covers his head and his camel's eyes until the storm is over.

But the hoghead in the cab of the jack on the White Express cannot turn his back. He simply stops his train, because he can no longer see his tracks. He goes back into the baggage car and prepares to take spot with the rest of the crew. Spot for a week if need be.

Sea of Sand

If the storm is short-lived, this eagle-eye gets out an hour later, and it isn't hard for him to imagine himself commanding a liner at sea. There is nothing to see but yellow waves, wrinkled across the horizon as far as the eye can take in. There are no signs of any tracks and no wires anywhere to tap and ask for help.

Then the whole crew digs an experimental hole. They determine by that hole how deep the newly blown sand is.

The White Express Fastest Train on the Big Desert A Hundred Miles in Nine Hours—Maybe

If it is but a few inches they scrape off the rails and the train steams ahead slowly. Sometimes a friendly wind comes from behind and blows the sand off again. By that time the air inside the cars is so full of flying dust that the passengers come out and help with the shoveling, and before long the train makes the railhead at either end.

The White Express is unique in the world. It is the only train I have ever ridden upon which has no schedule. The road prints a timetable of departures, and thereafter trusts to Allah and the wild-eyed hogger. There is no such thing as a fixed hour for the train to arrive—nor day, nor week, for that matter. It has 100 miles to run and anything may happen between here and there.

The name is derived from the color of the cars when the train quits Biskra or Touggourt, but has nothing to do with the color of the train when it arrives at the end of the run. If a sirocco has blown, it will be pelted with red sand and take on the hue of the Pennsylvania limiteds which run out to Chicago.

The "Union" Station at Lhenche'a with a Supply of Wood and Coal Piled Up in the Yard
Note Busses Waiting for Passengers for the Desert

It is a narrow gauge railroad, with

full sized equipment. The regular trucks have been taken off the locomotive and the small gauge trucks put on. There are four cars, painted white, and a double-walled baggage car, proof against sand and bandits.

There is one first and second class car with wide seats to allow sleeping, for nine months of the year this train must run at night. The sun is so hot that the passengers could not tolerate the heat incubated by the burning rays concentrated on tin roofs.

But the gem of the White Express is its dining car. I have eaten in dining cars around the world, but have never got more enjoyment out of a meal than I did between Biskra and Touggourt. That was a day the sirocco was not blowing, but there was another day when the desert cyclone was blowing up from the south, and on that occasion the bread tasted like sandpaper and the wine had to be eaten with a fork

Colonel De Noe, Commander of French Troops in the Sahara, Loads the White Express on the Jump

Ordinarily, the dining car steward,

The Hogger Has Trouble Here. This Desert Town Always Presents the Problem of Animals and Children Straying Along the Right-of-Way

who also cooks the meal and serves it, depends upon his own wits. He is furnished a few cases of canned foods, condensed milk and tinned butter. The rest he gets from the desert. If he is a good shot you eat well, but if it is one of his bad days with the rifle you may feel hungry before the end of the run. On one particular trip down to Touggourt, we saw a covey of wild ducks plop down on a salt lake along the right of way. It was more than an ordinary covey; in fact it took on the proportions of a cloud.

Ducks As You Like 'Em

The steward saw it as soon as I did. He pulled the bellrope and the train came to a grinding, sandy halt. He leaped out of the car with a pumpgun and started pumping. His ten-year-old Arab dishwasher acted as retriever. Inside of five minutes the train was on its way again and the ducks were starting to roast.

That particular meal will always remain in my mind. We started on the card, but the White Express had managed to lose a little time along the way —four or five hours—and we were still five hours away from Touggourt.

The only meal served was a late afternoon affair. We started with an orange juice cocktail to which the steward had contributed one orange and all the rest cognac. Then for our Arab companions, but not for us Americans, a tasty dish of roasted grasshoppers They were enormous insects, as large as your finger, and you cracked their shell and ate the tail. Judging by the smacking of lips and grunts of satisfaction which accompanied their chewing, they must have been delicious.

Then followed a dish of desert asparagus. It is really asparagus in name only, because some homesick Frenchman once imagined that he saw a resemblance between that desert weed and the vegetable he knew at home. But when they are cooked and served with a white cream sauce—concocted

They Serve French Food to the Desert Travelers

The Palatial Dining Car

from condensed milk which may have been cream a few years before—they stand up against the choicest asparagus tips that California could ever produce.

When I expressed surprise as to their origin, the steward confided that the Arab boy had picked them along the track while the train had halted to permit a few ducks to be shot.

Then came the ducks roasted with whole lemons. Less than an hour before they had been flying across the desert, from one salt lake to another, on their way to the Scandinavian summer feeding grounds. Unless you have eaten fresh duck, roasted with lemons, you have no knowledge of duck at its best. If I recall, the steward termed it "canard sauvage suprême," and I vouch that it was supreme.

The final entrée was roast leg of mutton, and had I not been in Africa for months on end, the mutton would have been great. But mutton and Africa are synonymous. It is like the roast beef of merry England, and the fried chicken of Baltimore. You can never eat in Africa without eating some form of mutton.

The dessert consisted of a rare delicacy, the hearts of palms. These are rare, for the reason that every heart you eat means the end of a tree. The Arabs climb the young palms and carve out the heart with long knives. The tree dies within a week. The hearts are an oily substance not unlike Brazil nuts. If you let them stand a few hours they grow bitter, but eaten fresh they are fit for gourmets.

There is not a drop of ice on the White Express, so the steward cannot carry meats and his beer and wines must be served warm. But to the desert shieks who make up the greatest part of his custom, those are minor matters. They have never seen ice and would probably not believe it if they did see any.

These noblemen of the sands consider a ride in the dining car as a glorious fling. They are wealthy in a worldly way and when they have sold their date crop or sent their sheep to market, they ride hundreds of miles to the rails of the White Express and wait for the next train.

They often descend on the dining car in platoons of twenty to fifty. Then the steward's work is cut out for him, and his little Arab almost drops in his tracks. The shieks ride back and forth on the train for several days until they have eaten their fill. They then drop

The Railway Station at Ourgolea. The Tracks Are There, but Under Three Feet of Sand

off at the point where they picketed their camels or horses and ride off to spread tales of their gastronomic adventures to their fellows. The Koran forbids their drinking alcoholic drinks, but for some reason beer is excepted and they wash down their French food with seads of warm beer. The result is to be anticipated.

Profits Are Large

The dining car alone would make the White Express a paying venture, but its profits from passengers and freight are great. Its upkeep is not costly. The cars and locomotive date to the war. German prisoners sent to Africa by the French laid the original track, and that cost nothing.

Everything that goes into the desert to feed the tribes, to house them and to provide them meager comforts, goes over the White Express to the end of the line, there to be met by six-wheeled automobiles or camel caravans. There is a motley lot of merchandise shipped over this train, and I recall my surprise to see an American sewing machine, crated, lifted off the train and swung over a camel's back on its way to grace the harem of a sheik deep in the desert.

This little railroad will some day be part of a great system running across the desert and linking Europe with the heart of Africa. That is no mere dream, for the French Parliament has already voted a credit of 1,000,000 francs to draw up first plans for the Trans-Saharian pike.

Its building will be a matter of the next ten years. Nothing can be done until the famous French Foreign Legion makes it possible for engineers to work along the right of way without being picked off by an Arab or Moor rifleman.

When the system is completed, France hopes to open up for herself the greatest granary in the world. There in the Niger Valley lie unclaimed to-day hundreds of thousands of acres of rich alluvial soil, useless because of the inability to market produce it may raise.

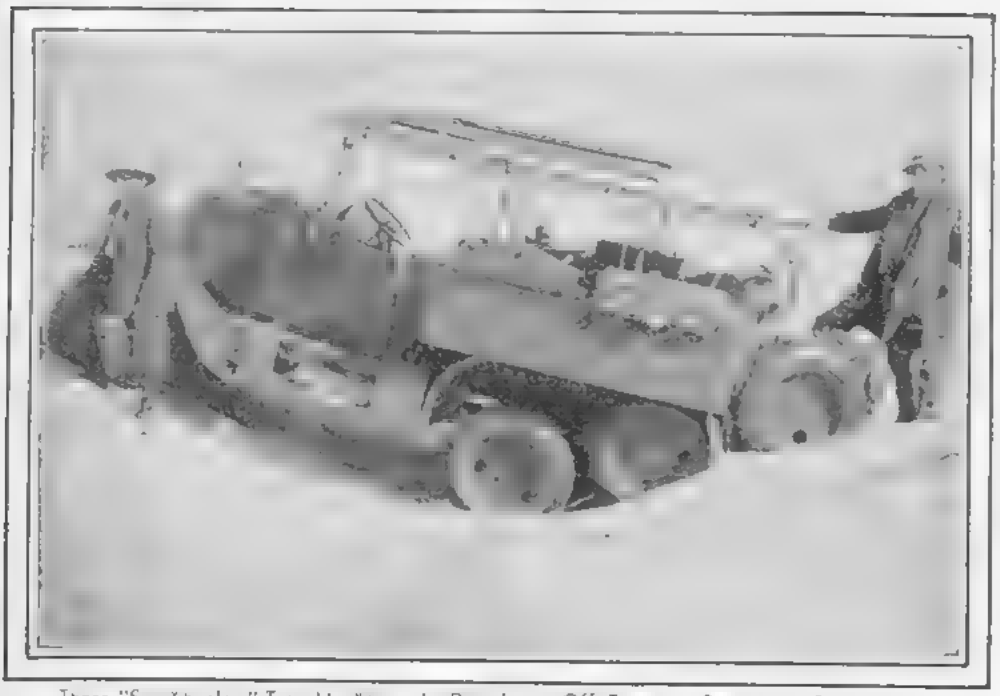
Once trains link up the Niger valley with the Mediterranean and make Timbuctoo only three days run from Paris, this granary can be counted upon to feed Europe. There is enough ground there to grow all the wheat, tether all the flocks of sheep and herds of meat cattle that Europe can require in the next century. All that is needed is an outlet

There will be difficulties, for the shifting sands will have to be conquered. The French are already experimenting with a spray which will be fitted to a tank car to sprinkle liquid cement along both sides of the right of way. This will make a thin coat of cement to hold down the sand.

There will also be a problem of furnishing the locomotives with fuel and water along the way, but this will probably be solved by replacing steam with electricity. There are vast unharnessed waterfalls in the Atlas Mountains, capable of furnishing all the power the road could need.

One such electric railway has already been built south from Casablanca to

Touggourt, Deep in the Desert, Is the End of the Run for the White Express



These "Six-Wheelers" Take Up Where the Rails Leave Off, Transport Freight and Passengers to the Far Reaches of the Sandy Wastes

the pleasure city of Marrakech in the foothills of the Atlas. That is as far as engineers have dared go, and even now stray shots are fired almost daily against the train.

It is really a freight line, linking the potash beds of the Atlas with the sea at Casablanca. In the mountains are beds of this mineral 99 per cent pure It is necessary only to scrape the mineral out of the ground and load it into cars. The profits are enormous.

And Then the Great Camel Train. It Penetrates Where Even the Six-Wheelers Cannot Go

Electrical trains carry this product to the sea, and make begrudging room for a few passengers. On windy days, the passengers end their ride covered with phosphates. The natives, unable to stand the cramped air of the car interiors, ride atop the cars and there is much picturesque and local color attached to the arrival of a train.

There are still vast areas of Morocco where no trains can run. The French are still attempting to pacify the Moors of the Riff and neighboring plateaus, and before long perhaps the wide space between Oudjda and Rabat can be linked by rail.

At present, it is necessary to travel by autocar, operated by the railway companies. There are frequent attacks, so three or four cars travel together for mutual protection. There is no attempt to move freight in this way, and camels are still the principal means of moving products into the interior of Morocco.

The finest railway in western Africa is the line skirting the sea from Oran, to Algiers and on to Constantine and Tunis. The trains run at night and it is just as well, for they are constantly in tunnels. There are sleeping cars which rival anything on the limited trains at home. There are four classes, the fourth being for Arabs and their horses, who will never travel apart. An Arab will leave his wife but never his horse.

NEW FUEL RECORD ESTABLISHED

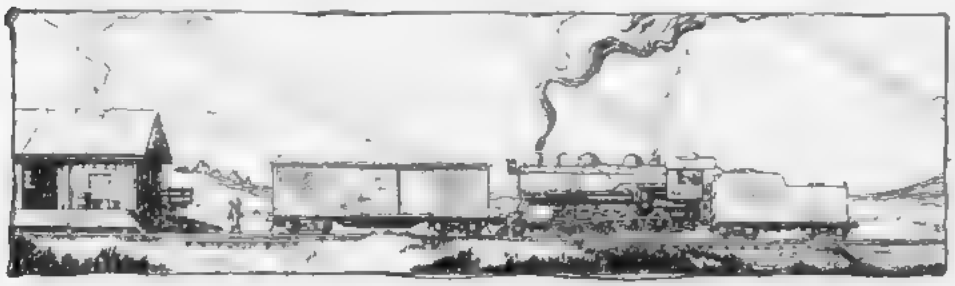
An amazing record of fuel efficiency was established in the first six months of the year 1929 by Class 1 railroads of the United States. The figures have just been made public in the reports filed by the railroads with the Bureau of Railway Economics.

During this time an average of 129 pounds of fuel was required for every 1,000 tons of freight and equipment hauled. This includes, of course, the locomotive and tender, and it is based on a mile pull. The compilation of these reports began in 1918 and the railroads show that they have attained the lowest average since that time. The reduction really amounts to two pounds under the best previous record, which was established in the first half of 1928.

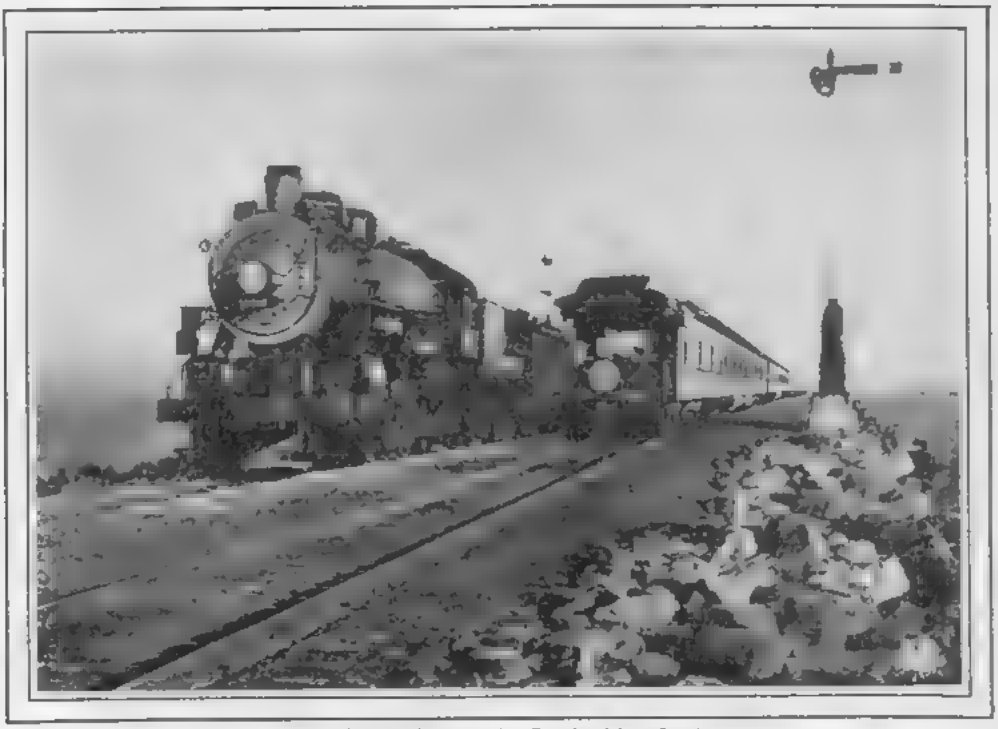
According to the figures, the railroads during the period mentioned hauled 78 tons of freight and equipment one mile for every pound of coal or its equivalent. Figured down still further, the railroads consumed only one-fifth of an ounce of fuel to handle one ton of freight and equipment one mile.

Nor did the record extend only to freight service. The first six months of 1929 showed that an average of 15.2 pounds of fuel or its equivalent was required to move each passenger train one mile, as compared with 15.5 pounds in the first six months of the previous year.

A fuel consumption totaling 36,054,598 tons of coal and 1,253,553,927 gallons of fuel oil is shown by the Class 1 railroads during the first half of 1929.



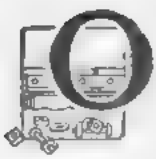
Hand ng on a ' 19 Order at M d oke n the Heart of Jhe Great Sa t Lake West of Ogden Utah



The Overland Meets the Overland "at Sea"

Clear Board Over the Lake

By Glen Perrins



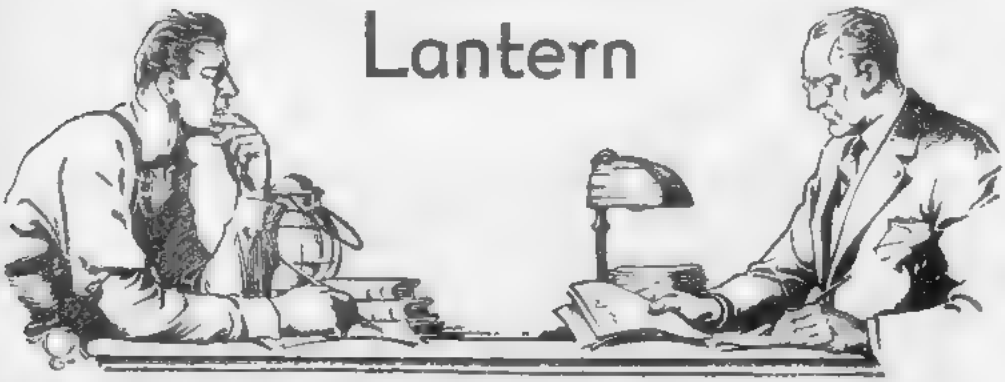
ONE of the most remarkable railroad main lines in the United States, and one of the most interesting to railroad men and travelers from all sections of the world, is that which streaks its way across Great Salt Lake, high in the Utah altitudes. Here the Southern Pacific, the Overland Limited route, virtually goes to sea by rail

This section of track, known as the Lucin Cut-off, runs due west of Ogden for 102.9 miles straight across the northern arms of the lake. The cut-off was built to beat the curves and the grades of the original route which traversed the lake's most northern edge The main line over the salty inland sea, shortens the Overland route by 43.8 miles, and was opened in 1904, after two years of the most hectic engineering activity

Seventy-two miles of this cut-off the rails are laid on land. Thirty miles of the track is over rock fills and heavy trestlework and twelve miles on trestles alone

The village of Midlake, the only place in America which has the railroad for its only street, lies between Ogden and Lucin.

By the Light of the Lantern



WE want to be as useful as possible to our readers, but, because of the great popularity of this department, we are obliged to impose certain restrictions. It is limited to the answering of questions of an informative, technical, or historical nature only. Letters concerning positions WILL NOT be answered. All letters should be signed with the full name of the writer, as an indication of his good faith. We will print only his initials. The editor begs that readers sending in questions will not be disappointed if the answers do not appear as early as expected. Delays are often unavoidable for two reasons: the magazine is printed two months in advance of the date of issue, and it frequently takes weeks to secure correct answers, owing to the complexity of the questions.

Types of Locomotives

DO you think that the Lorain, Ashland Southern Railroad will ever resume service?

(b) What types of locomotives and how many does the Lakeside and Marblehead Railroad operate, and where are their main shops located?

(c) What types of locomotives and how many does the Federal Valley Railroad operate, and where are their main shops located?—J. R. W., Cleveland, Ohio

(a) We are unable to obtain any information relative to this railroad.

(b) The Lakeside and Marblehead Railroad owns and operates ten miles of track and its motive power equipment consists of five coal burning engines. The mechanical department is located at Marblehead, Ohio.

(c) The Federal Valley Railroad owns and operates three coal burning locomotives, and the mechanical department is located in Columbus, Ohio.

The Federal Express

THE Federal Express leaving Washington, D. C., at 8 P.M. and making a stop at Baltimore, and leaving Baltimore at 8.55 P.M. for New York and Boston, stops at Manhattan Transfer. Can you tell me, please, if this train is connected to another engine at Manhattan Transfer, or does it just change engineers and firemen and continue the run to Boston?—J. J. N. S., Baltimore, Md.

The Federal Express changes from the steam locomotive to an electric locomotive at Manhattan Transfer and is thus hauled into Pennsylvania Station. The electric engine also takes it through the tubes beneath the East River into Sunnyside, where, at Harold Avenue, Long Island City, the Pennsylvania Lines electric engine is cut off and a New Haven electric takes the train via Hell Gate Bridge to New Haven. At New Haven another change of engine crews is made and change of engines, and the train is then handled into Boston with a steam locomotive.

Electric Engines

F. J., San Francisco, Cal. Since your query is extremely technical and one requiring extreme details, your best bet is to correspond with the General Electric Company or the Westinghouse Electric Company, both of which manufacture this sort of equipment. They will be glad to go into details with you and tell you just what has been done in the way of motors and trucks.

Automatic Block

A STATES that it is possible on main line railroads, where block systems are used, to set a block signal against an oncoming train by merely placing a piece of metal conductive of electricity along the two

rails anywhere along the block behind the signal. B contends that from a common sense viewpoint this statement is wrong, because if it were possible to set block signals in the manner stated, there would be no telling when a child might playfully leave a piece of conductive steel on the track, and criminals no doubt would use this to advantage. What is the answer?—R. W., Maplewood, N. J.

Any piece of conductive metal of the proper resistance will set the block at stop. However, it is not very easy to do this with a piece of wire. The wire may be of too high a resistance or it may be too low. A person wishing deliberately to stop a train by using wire to break the circuit would be handicapped unless he knew the exact resistance which would drop the relay and cause the block to become active. To make the board drop by using wire, it is necessary for one to sit in the middle of the tracks and extend his hands one to each rail, holding the wire between his thumb and forefinger. He must then scratch like everything to pierce the film that will be found on all rails and get a proper contact. He must make his contact by touching the wire to both rails simultaneously, and only in this way is it possible to use wire.

Brakemen and Flagmen

CAN men enter the railroad passenger service as brakemen or flagmen (which is superior?), or must one start in freight service?—E. W. B., Ft. Washington, Md.

The usual procedure is to begin in freight service. There are, however, some passenger men hired outright in busy terminals where the suburban traffic far exceeds freight traffic and, therefore, uses more employees in this branch of service. Passenger jobs ordinarily are considered much better jobs than freight service, and passenger men usually require a good deal of age to hold a job flagging. The flagman usually is a preferred job over that of brakeman.

Colored Coaches

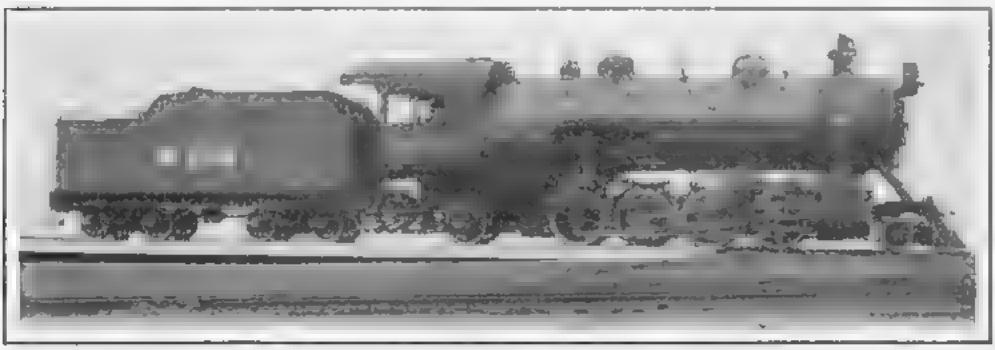
WILL you please inform us what principal roads are now using other colors than the old Pullman black for painting the outside of their coaches?—J. W. F., Los Angeles, Cal.

The Milwaukee road is noted for the brilliant yellow of its equipment. No matter where you are in the Northwest you can spot a Milwaukee train as far as the eye can see across the hills and prairies. The Pennsylvania Lines, of course, use red on not only their Pullman equipment, but all other passenger rolling stock. The Central Railroad of New Jersey has a solid blue train which operates between New York and Atlantic City, and there are other roads now making a play on something different in the line of coloring for cars.

D. & S. L. Motive Power

D. M. R., Colorado Springs.—We reproduce herewith photographs of the two types of engines concerning which you have made inquiry. The 200 class, as pictured, is the Mallet now in use on the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad, and the 408 is the type of Mikado engine in heavy freight service. The Mallet is of 32-inch cylinder stroke and the cylinder diameter is H. P. 21 inches, L. P. 33½ inches. These engines are equipped with 55-inch drive wheels, carry 225 lbs. pressure and are 72 feet 9 inches in length over all. The weight of the engine in working order is 359,000 pounds and the maximum tractive power is 76,400 pounds. The factor of adhesion is 4.34. Soft coal is used and the fire box is 72.2 square feet.

The Mikado class has 26-inch x 30-inch cylinders, 55-inch driving wheel diameter and



The Denver & Salt Lake Mikado Type Locomotive

The Denver & Salt Lake Mallet Engine

is 66 feet 7½ inches over all in length. Its weight in working order is 300,000 pounds for the engine alone, and the tender is 169,700 pounds. The fire box grate area is 63.3 square feet. These engines also burn soft coal and are equipped with mechanical stokers and power reverse. The total tractive power is 58,000 pounds The factor of adhesion is 3.92.

Both locomotives were built by The American Locomotive Company

Track History

D. K., Parsons, Kansas—A total of 1,098 new miles of railways were constructed in the United States in the year of 1916, and while this was more than during the year of 1915, it was still less than for any other year previous since the Civil War The longest continuous line built in 1916 was the Charleston Southern and part of the Seaboard Air Line from Charleston, S. C., to the Georgia State line. The distance was eighty-eight miles. In the same year the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul road built sixty-six miles from Great Falls, Montana, to Agawan

Special Agents

THE special agents department for the secret service system of the railroad is that part of the organization to which is assigned the protection of the company's property and also that of the shippers and passengers. Where illegal practices may occur in dealing with almost any branch of transportation companies, it is this department that generally conducts investigations. Some roads engage men in this work and call them "detectives," and some of the larger systems in one branch of this service include the railroad police, some of whom actually do patrol duty. Trains containing valuable shipments are intrusted to the care of these agents for protection against thievery The duties assigned to men in this branch of railroad work are many and the organization varies greatly with the different roads

The Santa Fe Type

F. V., Des Moines, Iowa—The engine known as the Santa Fe type has a wheel arrangement of two trucks under the cylinders, ten driving wheels, five to each side and a two-wheel rear truck. It is usually known as the 2-10-2. The name was derived from the building of the first of these engines for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, by the Baldwin Locomotive Works

Sleeping Car Distances

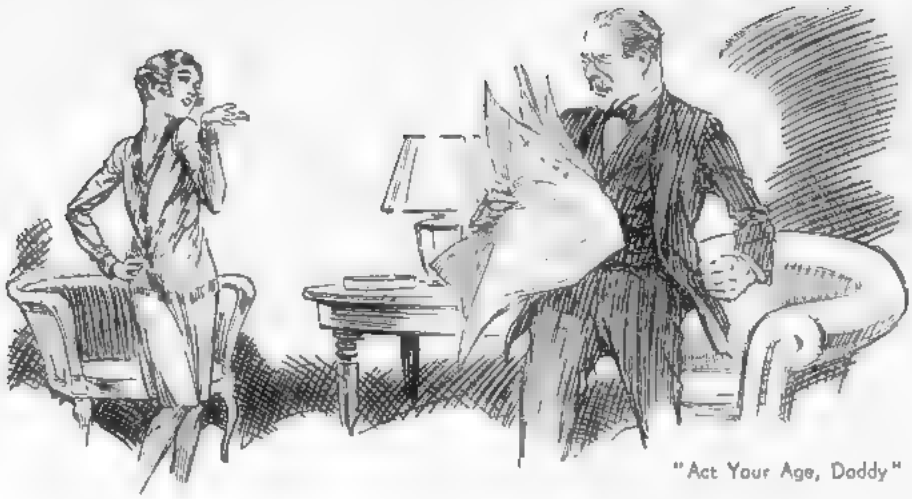
WHAT is the longest distance traveled by sleeping cars on one continuous trip? —R. H., Buffalo, N. Y.

The longest regularly operated sleeping car line is covered by the tourist cars that run between Washington and Los Angeles, via the Southern Railway, Western Railroad of Alabama, Atlanta & West Point, Louisville & Nashville and Southern Pacific — distance, 3,163 miles

The Plant System Record

PLEASE inform me what type of locomotive that was used when a train on the Plant System made a record of 120 miles an hour for a five-mile stretch. I believe this was about the year 1901. Do you know of any speed record, either official or unofficial, which was greater than the above? E. C., Woodhaven, N. Y.

This speed was made on the Atlantic Coast Line from Screven to Satilla. The engine was No. 111, a ten-wheeler of the 4-6-0 type, and so far as is known this speed has never been equaled or this record broken



"Act Your Age, Daddy"

Porky Goes Up

All "31's" Were Disregarded and the Rolling Stock of the Division Held a Reunion Under the "Ham's" Nose

By Griff Crawford

THERE was one fly in the ointment of Superintendent Burdick's official soup and that was the train dispatchers' personnel on the division he had just been given jurisdiction over. Having, at one period of his life, been a dispatcher, he naturally concluded that singly and collectively the rest were all dumb-bells of the first degree. In fact, he had been heard to observe that if train dispatchers were rated at a million dollars each the entire bunch of nine in his office would not bring enough to buy a ham sandwich. From this version it may well be concluded that his quotations were utterly at variance with the valuation the light brigade placed upon themselves.

"Let him set in; let him set in, if he's so good," declaimed "Porky" Todd, third trick on the main line, "and show us how this thing should be handled—anybody can run a typewriter and ask insane questions."

These remarks, intended for the privacy of the office, eventually were relayed to the object of their sting and from thenceforth Porky was marked for the slaughter. It was not that the superintendent hated dispatchers less—but Porky more. And so, when he alighted from business car 326 one afternoon three months after his appointment and his better half announced that Lady Lou, sweet twenty and their only offspring, had been seen riding with this same Mr. Todd in a renovated light six of uncertain quality and destination unknown, Mr. Burdick bit

his official lip and unloaded his excess spleen as regarded the nerve and unfitness of the subject under discussion. He left matters in no uncertain light so far as his personal opinion and handling of future cases was concerned. The same subject had been up before in the budget of home rules and regulations and, even at those times, he had unbosomed himself loudly and well but the words seemed to have fallen on barren ground, and when he had called Lady Lou to account, explaining the difference in rank between a superintendent of one division with three districts attached and a common, ham dispatcher.

"Act your age, daddy; you was a ham dispatcher yourself once and the boys say you was punk, at that."

"What boys say that? Who dares—" But all he got was a giggle, a saucy flirt of an abbreviated skirt and a fanciful kiss blown in the general direction of where he stood.

It was no wonder, then, that the news imparted to him was disquieting. True, he could fire the presumptive Porky—and would—but he wanted it to stick when he did so—he wanted something that would leave no loophole for the fire-ee to come crawling through if the higher officials should decide to reconsider or reinstate. When this particular gent was fired he intended he would stay fired.

"How long has this been going on?" he demanded.

"Ever since you forbid her having anything to do with him." There may have been a slight twinkle in the eyes of the better-half—may have been—but the superintendent did not see it.

"Well, it's over with now—I'll have no more of it."

"It's hard to regulate young folks, daddy, remember that."

"Of course it is if you're mealy-mouthed about it. I am going to set my foot down on this affair—and set it down hard."

"You know my father forbid me meeting you—"

"Humph! What's that got to do with it? Your father was wrong of course. You were meeting somebody when you met me—but Lady Lou, Lord; a dispatcher—and the dumbest one of the lot, too."

"I've spoken to her—but it does no good."

"Well, you watch how it works out when I tell her a thing or two—see whether I do any good or not."

"It will be interesting, daddy, I feel sure."

II

MAIN STREET, at eight forty-five, was taking on signs of life. Gregg, the barber, was throwing his doors open to the potential whiskers, boyish-bobs and talcum necks that might filter into his place of business; from Ed's Café came the odor of baking hot cakes and near-coffee; across the middle of the block between Fifth and Sixth Streets a dog trotted obliquely toward Schnitzel's butcher shop; at the corner of Seventh and Main a trim form walked back and forth impatiently, stopping now and then to glance down toward the depot, where a morning local was approaching, coming out of the yards, the exhaust telling plainly it was, as usual, overloaded.

Suddenly, a block south of the track a renovated light six cut around the corner, its driver stepping on the gas feed until it pressed prone against the foot-board of the car—he was trying to beat the slow, dragging train to the crossing. In the days of its youth the thing might have been accomplished, but miles and more miles had served to

remove much of the pep from the valves and pistons, and its best efforts were not good enough — it was still several feet from success when the engine dragged across, cutting short the flight, which came to a stop with squeaking brakes and unkind remarks from the driver.

A man riding a bicycle was also cut off and the two glared at the inoffensive flat, box and coal cars that were now moving slower and slower. The impatient driver looked at his watch and groaned, the bicyclist sat down on the curb and the local engine gave a last, despairing puff and stopped—stalled. Instantly the light six gave forth a blare of honks commanding and smacking of temperament. A brakeman, high and secure on the top of a car, thumbed his nose at the driver insolently.

"O K," shouted the maligned one—"O K, but if I don't put you in the hole every time I get you out on my trick. You'll throw many a switch henceforth and forever for this bit of smart-Aleck stuff, ol' car-hopper, even to the third and fourth generation—if any. O K." Having relieved his mind to some extent he settled back on the cushions for a considerable wait and was not disappointed. However, eventually, the yard engine coupled on and shoved the lumbering train over the hump, thus clearing the way, and traffic poured across—Porky in the light six and the bicyclist, side by side. The time was nine seventeen—

"Twenty minutes late—not so bad," he mused.

At Seventh and Main the trim form caught sight of the delinquent when he was yet two blocks away—when he drew up at the curb he was greeted by an inquiring, almost an accusing look. "Hello, buttercup"—he called cheerily—"how's a girl?"

"Where were you this forenoon, Porky?"

"Traffic jam, angel child; all mussed up—"

"Traffic jam, in this town? Don't make me laugh."

"Fact; me and a man on a bicycle—59 stuck on the crossin'—" He opened a door and the form stepped inside, there was a clang and the renovated six rolled more or less quietly away. "Congestion is gettin' fierce now'days, baby; howdja say you was?"

"Bowed down with sadness and remorse, Porky."

"Why the cast-downness? How come the agony?"

"We must never meet again — never."

"Where didja read that?"

"It was spoken drama—daddy has issued an ultimatum."

"Well, well; so he's been broadcastin' again, eh?"

"He's in earnest this time, deadly earnest. He has set his foot down."

"And when he sets one of his feet down, baby—somethin' has been set down—you can't drop a number eleven without—"

"Nine and one-half, Porky; why will you exaggerate about daddy's feet?"

"It don't make any difference, angel child; when a foot gets above a nine it's practically ruined anyway. So he forbids us these innocent hours of bliss, these moments of unrestrained joy, does he?"

"Forever and ever."

"Awful!"

"Terrible!"

"Parents are so crool, ginger-snap; sometimes I'm glad I was born an orphan."

"Oh, what-ta-do, what-ta-do, Porky?"

"We'll fight it out along this line if it takes all summer, as Sherman said at Ticonderoga."

"That was Grant at Vicksburg where Jackson built the stone wall, silly."

"Have it your own way, baby; did I tell you about lookin' at the two-room-flat - five - room - efficiency - patent - clothes-chute-be-your-own-ice-man affair?"

"Where Were You This Forenoon, Porky?"

"Three times—but it listens sweet—go on."

"It's fifty-five per—"

"Maybe we'd better wait—I'm so frustrated—daddy might fire you?"

"Then what'd become of the railroad?"

"He thinks the stock would go up; maybe we'd better—"

"Listen, sugar plum; he, or she, who waits ain't gettin' anywhere. If we waited and some flapper'd steal me away—"

"You wouldn't let 'em, Porky; you know you wouldn't."

"But if one DID? Then what'd become of you?"

"Pooh; I suppose you think I could not get a bigger, better, handsomer man any day? I suppose you think I couldn't get—"

"Not unless you changed papas; nobody but me'd stand his childish way and put up with his foolishness and his inconsideration of operators who like daughters."

"Oh, but wouldn't he tie a can on you if he heard that? I've half a notion to tell him—"

"You won't, baby; I'll admit he's superintendent of a division with three districts hung up on it, but at that he's just one of the hired help workin' for his b and b same as me. Of course, he gets more money, which is a mistake—a big mistake—and—"

"I suppose you think a dispatcher should get as much money as a superintendent? I never heard of one who was underpaid."

"More, honey—much more; ask any dispatcher, they'll tell you the same thing—it ain't just me that feels that way about it. But to get back to the two-room-five-room-efficiency proposition—what say?"

"I suppose it's strictly modern and up-to-date?"

"Even to a dumb-bell janitor and a blondine manageress."

"W-e-l-l?"

"Huh?"

"Who's the boss?"

"O K, baby. The die is casted. I shall visit the blondine lady and pay down enough shekels to command the situation ere yon sun reaches the zenith."

"How—how old is this blondine lady, Porky?"

"Too old, baby; much too old."

"I'm awfully interested in the apartment."

"I thought you would be and as long as we can't see one another forever and ever I'll say good-by till eight to-night —same old place."

"Make it eight twenty—so you'll be o. t."

"I'll be on the schedule, angel child —barrin' traffic jams."

At eleven forty Porky ascended the stairs to the dispatcher's office—singing:

> "Such is life in the far, far West—
> Where the hop-toads hop and the
> bull-bats nest—"

At eleven fifty he was poring over the transfer, checking orders, meets and files. The song had left his lips. The night held ear-marks of a bad one.

"She's a bear-cat, Porky," said Riggs, the man he was relieving—"God pity poor dispatchers on a night like this."

"You talk so cheerful, Spec, you nearly make me weep."

"Did you rest good to-day?"

"Like a new-born babe; clear conscience, Spec—oughta try it."

"To-morrow"—croaked Spec—"is yet another day; good night."

"Good night, old grave-digger; go home and dream a dirge."

III

At three A. M., Porky was five orders behind and the situation gaining on him. Everything was going wrong. He couldn't coax 'em to move and as soon as he had one thing fixed two more happened. Between orders he cursed the day that set him on a trick. He looked at the sheet in supreme disgust. "Hey, Skinny," he called across the table to the branch man—"Hey!"

"'Smatter?"

"If you had three w. p. 8's comin' east; four w. p. 9's goin' west; three drags mixed up among 'em; No. 9 and 10 both late; two wheezy locals with the crews stallin' to make overtime and maybe tie up on the sixteen hour law; half the engines runnin' hot and the other half runnin' cold and the drags all too many cars to clear on any of the passin' tracks—what'd you do?"

"Quit," said Skinny with conviction.

"But if ya had to keep on eatin'?"

"That'd have a bearin' on the case, certainly; yes, that'd have a bearin'."

"Well, that's the situation."

"You understand, of course," continued Skinny, "that w. p. 8's must not be delayed for w. p. 9's; that w. p. 9's must not be delayed for w. p. 8's; that No. 9 must not be delayed for No. 10; that No. 10 must not be delayed for No. 9; that the drags have got to be kept movin' so the power'll be at the other end to turn back and that the locals positively must not make road-overtime or tie up on the law?"

"Sure, everybody knows that. And you've got a single track road, short passin' tracks and a hope that a rich uncle'll die and leave you enough money to get outa town. Ain't we got fun?"

"You know what happens to dispatchers that don't move trains, doncha?"

"Sure—they fire 'em and get somebody that does worse."

"Sometimes—but not always; mostly they makes officials of 'em, then they write letters tellin' dispatchers what to do and how to do things they couldn't do themselves."

"Ain't that the truth? It's a gay life."

"To-morrow, now, for instance, when the g. m. reads the mornin' reports, he'll turn to his steno—'Take one to the a. g. m.—"miserable showing symbol trains middle division—investigate—advise"'; then the a. g. m., he'll turn to his steno—'Take one to the g. s. —"miserable showing symbol trains middle division—investigate—advise"'; then the g. s. will limber up his menial—'Take one to the supt.—"miserable showing symbol trains middle division—investigate—advise"'; then the super'll get into action—'Take one to the t. m.—"miserable showing symbol trains middle division—investigate—advise"'; then the t. m. will send it in to the chief with a 'note and advise' and the chief will send it in here with a note, 'note and advise'; and all you'll have to do is explain why you done it or why you didn't do it and you will learn that either way you was wrong and a bonehead and even then the stars will shine at night, the sun come up at dawn and the seasons come and go; all's well with the world."

There was no reply. Porky was too busy to listen, just then. With nose buried in the sheet he was trying to untangle something or other and Skinny, ignored, went about the business of fixing up his mine runs and the locals. Came an explosion from across the table

"This is one helluva railroad."

"'Smatter, friend?"

"I give a w. p. 8 time to make Frisbie for a w. p. 9 and give the w. p. 8 time to go to Richards for No. 10 and 9 and the w. p. 9 has a hot box and the w. p. 8 gets a brake beam down and the whole cussed works will be at Richards, with No. 9 and 10 meetin' there, and they'll saw till the cows come home and No. 9's engine is failin' for steam and the operator at Taylor's drunk, or sick or somethin' and gone home and I ain't very well myself. Outside of that, everything's jake."

"The stenos shall be busy this day, Porky."

"And how!"

"The barrage will open about nine and the fire shall be heavy and concentrated like the night we got the Fritzies mad and they spent many dollars in ammunition tryin' to caress us with a steel shampoo. Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness, as the Bible says."

"That ain't in the Bible — that's taken from the minutes of the U. S. Senate."

"Boy, there's nothin' taken from them minutes—it'd be like tryin' to get rich, red blood from a oyster shell—it ain't there. Whom the gods would destroy they first make train dispatchers. Where do you go from here?"

"To the booby house; all I need now is a toy dog, a sand pile and a place where I can pull the grass with my toes."

"And once, I presume, you was a fair haired child whom doting parents sent forth to conquer the world?"

"Well, as Napoleon said when he crossed the Delaware — 'I'll fight it out along this line if it takes all winter.'"

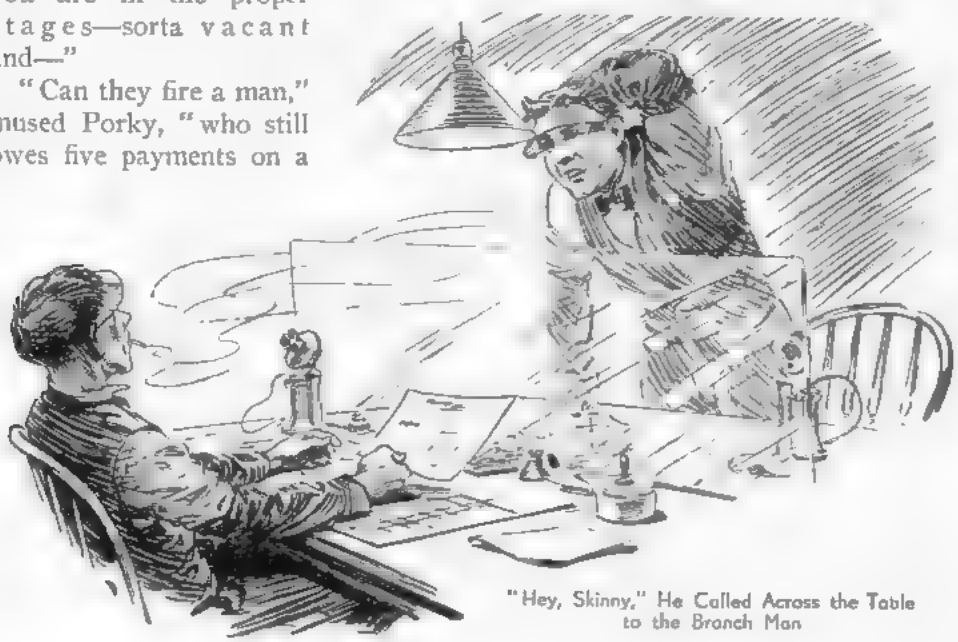
"Not on this line, Porky; three hours after yon coming dawn I pre-

dict there shall be weeping, wailing and gnashing of typewriters. I'll predict even more—"

"It's somethin' cheerful, I'll bet."

"It is and it ain't. I forecast your early promotion to an official position; you are in the proper stages—sorta vacant and—"

"Can they fire a man," mused Porky, "who still owes five payments on a



"Hey, Skinny," He Called Across the Table to the Branch Man

renovated six?" He gazed at the sheet mournfully and appraisingly. "It must look like a Fourth of July celebration at Richards, now; with the white lights, the head lights, the fusees and red lights — everything goin' but the trains—"

"I see the picture—"

"No artist could paint it—he would not have the heart."

"'The conductors," continued Skinny, "will first swap all the latest stories they have picked up; then the engineers'll lie about the fast runs they made on the Erie, or the B. & O., or whatever road they got fired from; then when the brakemen get the drawbars picked up and the cars chained properly the crews will bid one another a fond farewell and see what they can do about movin'—maybe."

"Don't! Why make me feel bad? I'll pay for the Java if you'll hie to yonder beanery and have the bucket filled; I feel the need of a stimulant—and there's nothin' but coffee, nothin' but coffee."

"Done, noble co-inmate; the nectar from Fred's shall warm the cockles of your heart and make you glad."

"I have no such faith as you possess; I feel I shall never smile again."

"Cheer up — the worst is yet to come; behind yonder dawn comes the super-sun—"

"And a super-intendent. Away, varlet; McPherson of the w. p. 8 is now on the phone—he tells me they have pulled two draw-bars and the works is tied up at Richards. Amen."

IV

After hot cakes, coffee and bacon strips at Fred's Porky nosed the reno-

vated six up Main Street toward the intersection of Seventh. As he drove, he contemplated many things. The superintendent would return Wednesday morning according to the line-up—this was Tuesday. It was probable he would get to work to-night, yet—then? Well, if they fired him, O K; if they didn't O K; he knew where he could get a job on a farm and maybe that would be better anyway; farm life wasn't so bad. He had spent a vacation once on a farm and sort of liked it. He knew one milked a cow from the right-hand side and went to town on Saturday afternoons—that would not be bad. It might be lonesome for Lady Lou, but she was a game little chicken—there she was now, waiting as usual. "Fifteen this time, Porky; you're getting better—"

"Chide me not, dimpled cheeks; my heart is bowed with woe."

"How come, cavalier?"

"Cavi-he-er, angel child, did you ever notice those cute little ice boxes they use to sell pop from—where you put a warm bottle in on this side and a cold one hops out on the other—didja?"

"Of course, simple; everybody knows what they are. Why?"

"That's just the way it'll be when your papa comes in from sea—I mean from the rail. He'll come in warm and all het up from the west and I'll pop out to the east, cold and clammy. It is written."

"Cause why? He don't know we meet—"

"It ain't that, honey; I've had a terrible night—almost a nightmare—I could almost neigh."

"You didn't get 'em together, didja, honey boy?" There was real anxiety in her tones.

"Not like you mean, peaches; I tried for three hours to get 'em close enough to each other to meet—then they all decided to hold a reunion and met at the same place—all of 'em. I think they're there yet—maybe."

"Maybe daddy won't—"

"Yes he will; your daddy'll put on an exhibition that will stand as a record for all time; he'll slam both of them number elevens down—hard. And if he had hind feet he'd slam them down, too. I never—"

"I've told you they are nine and one halfs, Porky. Why—"

"Let it pass—let them pass—why cavil over one and a half when the price of sox is the same for both."

"Is there no way out of this, cavalier?"

"Poison—or the sword—and I am so young."

"And I look so terrible in black—don't do it, Porky."

"Them words saved me; I shall live for revenge and to finish payin' for the car. You shall not don the damnable black for me."

"Noble something-or-other, you live for me."

"And the car. And maybe I can get part of the rent money back from the blondine lady—it don't look like we're goin' to move our trunk in now, angel child."

"I feel like crying, I do, Porky. I was going to surprise you with some nice biscuits that I would make myself—"

"Did you ever bake biscuits, sweet one?"

"No—but you just mix something up and cut out the cute little things and bake them—that's all there is to it."

"I—you'd better stick to baker's bread, dearie—it—it would be so hard on you—so much work to make biscuits—I couldn't allow it."

"There you go—finding fault already—with my bis—"

"There, there; Porky's mean—her can bake all the biscuits her wants to and Porky'll eat 'em—maybe. After to-night—what?"

"Faint heart ne'er—"

"Faint, nothin'; he who takes up dispatching shall perish by dispatching. I am resigned—or should resign—

"To-morrow then—
I'll beard the roaring lion in his den—
Alas! Alack!
'Til then—farewell"

"And Porky," Lady Lou cautioned. "I know daddy like a book. Look him right in the eye when he calls you on the carpet—right in the eye."

"All right, baby; which eye?"

At eleven fifty Porky signed the transfer.

"Ca'm as a June morning, Porky," said Riggs.

"After the typhoon of yesterday? 'Tis well. Ah-ha! I am attracting attention, noble sirs. Herewith are three communications asking 'why?' and a personal from the chief saying—'The superintendent wants to see you in his office at nine o'clock tomorrow.'" He tossed them back in the file and hummed—

"If you knew daddy, as I know daddy—"

"If you knew daddy as you will know daddy—" Skinny suggested.

"On with the dance—let joy be unrefined."

"I hear they want a man at Pueblo, friend."

"Merry-sun-shine, I thank you."

"There's a cold winter ahead. They predict—"

"I Offered to Wait Till He Went Out and Bought Some, but That Just Seemed to Make Him Madder Than Ever"

"Have on, varlet, and make people hate you."

V

WHAT a difference but a few hours make—on a railroad. Last night where confusion reigned supreme — all was gentle as a mid-summer night's dream. No. 9 and 10, both on time—symbol trains sliding by each other like they were running on double track, locals in and out of the way. It was a cinch. Anybody could handle trains like they

performed to-night—no one could do it as they performed last night. Porky put out but few orders and they all stood up—it was simply a case of marking the "os" opposite the stations as operators reported them "by." It wasn't such a bad job—sometimes.

The seat of war had been transferred to Skinny's districts, where he toiled with an engine failure and a derailment. Porky enjoyed giving him sarcastic advice from time to time—if he was worried over the contemplated nine o'clock affair he did not show it. When he left the office at eight he went directly to Fred's for the morning repast—there was one appointment he expected to make on time and at eight fifty-five he knocked at the door marked Superintendent. A voice with no humor, no hint of hospitality in it, bade him enter.

At ten twenty he emerged into the hallway and walked blithely down the stairs singing, in subdued tones, his favorite roundelay—

> "Such is life in the far, far West—
> Where the hop-toads hop and the
> bull-bats nest—"

On to the renovated six, where he climbed in, and wended his way toward Seventh and Main. Lady Lou had been there since nine thirty. Stepping on the gas he dashed up, made an emergency stop and bowed through the windshield. "Pack your trunk, angel child—we're on our way."

There was a hint of tears in the eyes of Lady Lou—she looked at her semi-gladiator sadly. "For where, Porky?"

"To the blondine lady's and happiness—maybe."

"Porky did you—are you—?"

"I did and I am, jewel; it was a momentous meeting."

"Tell me; enlighten your baby-doll."

"Well, he cut up, babe; I'll say he cut up. First he fired me after intimatin' I'd been drawin' money under false pretenses. He was so sarcastic it almost bowed me down with shame. Then he tramped around with them—them flatboats of his till he shook the buildin' and wound up by tellin' me to go and get the money comin' to me and to never cross the right-of-way again—at least not to let him catch me doin' it."

"Yes, yes; go on. And then—"

"And then—I happened to mention how tough it would be on you, and he liked to have turned a back-hand-spring. He demanded to know by what right I even spoke your name, sweet girl. He demanded many things and when—"

"And when, Porky? Now's the interesting part; oh, my heart."

"That's indigestion, honey—when I told him we were married six months ago he nearly busted. It seemed to worry him."

"But what did he say?"

"Plenty; 'dammit' seemed a favorite but there were others bigger, better and stronger—all were descriptive."

"Don't be so exasperating—go on."

"At first he was goin' to shoot me. It seems the special agent left a gun in your papa's desk some months ago and that was to be the fowling piece that was to lay me low, but, upon investigation, it was discovered to be empty, entirely devoid of cartridges. I offered to wait till he went out and bought some, but that just seemed to make him madder than ever. You can't suit these old codgers, baby; you just can't do it."

"They are so set in their ways, cavalier."

"Then he got to figurin' on how long it'd take him to get cleared in court to make it all legal if he did

demise me and the best he could estimate it would take a week. He didn't seem to think he could spare the time. Finally it was one of two things—the way he looked at it. He either had to kill me or promote me."

"And what did he do—?"

"Well, I ain't a corpse, am I?"

"You mean he did and you are?"

"He did—and I am. He had authority to put another train master on with jurisdiction over the branch lines. I am it."

"You mean you are a train master, Porky?"

"The youngest—and best—in the business."

"Oh, I am so kerflummoxed. Now for the blondine lady's 'five-in-two' and hot biscuits."

"Let's not get excited over them biscuits, honey. Later on, maybe—"

"You don't like my biscuits—I can see that."

"I've never seen 'em, baby; but I know it takes years of experience—"

"O K; eat your old baker's bread then. It's all right with me but I can hardly wait until we get settled down at the blondine lady's. I'll make you a charlotte-russe the very first day."

"Baby, listen; I wouldn't wear one of them things on a bet. Let's just kinda drift along without puttin' on frills."

"Maybe" — sighed Lady Lou — "maybe it would have been better if the gun had been loaded."

"Now don't get snippy. Hop and let's run down to my office—I want you to hear me dictate, honey."

Seated behind the door labeled Train Master, Porky buzzed for his stenographer. "Listen to this, baby; it's goin' to be good." He turned to the young lady who, pencil and pad in hand, was awaiting his pleasure. "Take one to Dispatcher Boweles" — he grinned — "that's Skinny — you've heard me speak of Skinny, angel child," to the steno— "Note attached delay to 46 at Bingo—

5 mins eat;
5 mins load and pick up 2 cars hogs;
5 mins pack hot box;
35 mins meet No. 27—

—could you not have moved this train to Adams for 27 and avoided the 15 mins overtime this crew made? Must insist more attention be given locals. (signed) H. P. Todd, T. M."

He grinned across at Lady Lou. "It would be worth the money to hear Skinny when he gets that, buttercup, but it would be language not intended for your dainty ears. Let's away to the grocery and look over potential provender for the kitchenette."

"Shall we run in and see daddy a moment?"

"Er—no. Let's let him ponder over his life of crime. Remorse will do him good. You know, baby, I give you all the credit for this—the tip was worth its weight in gold."

"Which tip — I've given you so many?"

"About lookin' him in the eye."

"And did you?"

"Did I? Oh, sweet girl—and how?" Porky chuckled. "I waited till the psychological moment, then I concentrated on his right eye—just stared at him. He got nervous and, I thought, wilted a little."

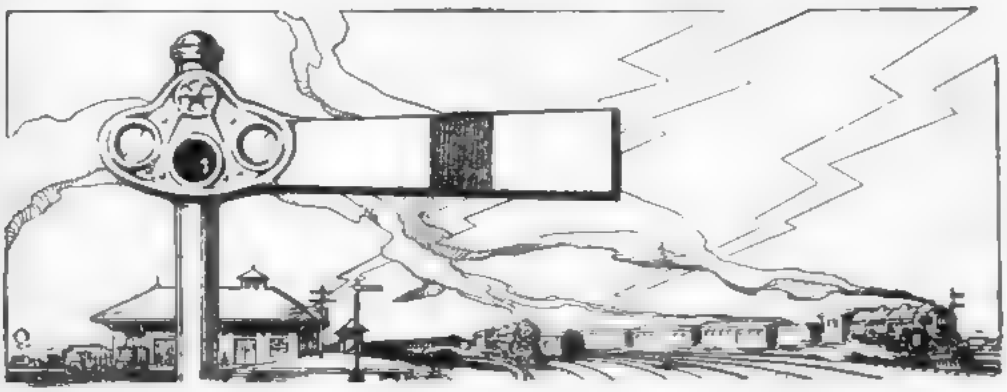
"You humiliated my daddy like that?"

"Like what? You told me to—"

"Poor daddy; no wonder he didn't bat that eye—it's his glass one."

"Glass one? A glass eye? Can you imagine it—a glass eye and them feet? Lord, honey, what a papa we got!"

My Greatest Thrill



A department where true experiences of railroad men are related. Prompt payment at good rates is offered for narratives of personal thrills. Each story must be verified.

Two Inches From Death

Scrapping Cinders Lacerated His Back, and a Thousand Deaths Loomed as Hoppers Cleared Him by a Hair

By Ralph O. Seaman

NUMBER ninety-three, with a string of seventy loads of steel, had just got her orders twisted. Rolling down a steep grade at nearly forty-five, she rounded a curve. Seventy-five yards ahead, rolling out onto the main, was a mine run pulling a drag of fourteen hoppers of coal off the mine spur. The mine run's caboose was ahead of the locomotive, or, rather, behind it, because the engine was backing up.

Bop-bop-bop-bop-bop-bop! shrieked the staccato blast of ninety-three's whistle.

A brakie riding the mine run's caboose howled at the top of his voice, slammed on the air and unloaded pronto. The engineer on ninety-three applied his emergency and he and his fireman unloaded. The crew of the mine run lost no time in quitting the train. But seventy loads of steel on a steep grade can't be stopped on a dime.

The mine spur's conductor, in the cupola of the caboose, heard the brakie's warning yell. He started down. As he got halfway to the floor of the caboose, ninety-three plowed through. One man in a light caboose between two heavy locomotives!

Result: One man killed instantly, four injured badly from jumping, fifteen thousand dollars' damage to equipment.

It was the day after the disaster. Did you ever notice how old road men gather about after every mishap and relate their own actual and fabricated stories? Well, this was one of those days. I was hurriedly billing out some rush steel for which the crew of an extra were waiting. Their engine was in the clear outside of the station house. A dozen men were in the station, spinning yarns that went all over the country.

Finally old Jack Marker, grizzled and gray and wrinkled, held the floor. Quite casually, although using language that the average road man is incapable of, he related the following tale:

Yes, boys, railroading may be a dangerous pastime all right, but I shuffled cars on six different outfits from coast to coast for more than eighteen years before I heard the swish of old Father Time's scythe as it whizzed close above me.

Oh, I had had the bumps and bruises that every brakie absorbs during the course of his life on the steel ribbons, but never had I got into a scrape that would have been valuable to talk about when fellows get together like we're here together now.

Not until my nineteenth year on the road, my seventh year as conductor on the old T & H E, did I get the real thrill. The waybill itself was possibly the cause of it all. It still is somewhere up home, although it is cut cleanly into two parts—where the heavy wheels passed over it and its fifteen brethren. But that's way ahead of my story.

It was in the early summer. It was a warm day and everything seemed to be sailing along smoothly. Gravel business was moving briskly and we had just pulled the transfer of the B & W. Twenty-three cars we had pulled off, sixteen loads of gravel and sand and seven loads of other stuff, stuff that we'd have to kick back into the transfer after we'd kicked our stuff down the main. They only had a one way transfer there and the cars to be delivered to the B & W were, of course, next to the engine.

It was no different than the procedure we went through every day through the spring and summer and fall months, yet to-day little did I dream of what I was in for. Everything went off okay, just as it always did. I uncoupled the sixteen gravel as old Baldy, the engineer, began shoving them down the main—after we'd got clear of the transfer.

Baldy gave the string a good healthy kick and then eased up on the throttle. The roadbed there lay on a gentle down grade to the T & H E scales, two miles south of the transfer, and Baldy knew, just as we all knew, that the cars would drift down that grade while he put the other seven loads back onto the transfer. Then he'd roll back onto the main again with just the locomotive and shoot down the grade and catch me with the string of cars just about half a mile before we'd get to the scales.

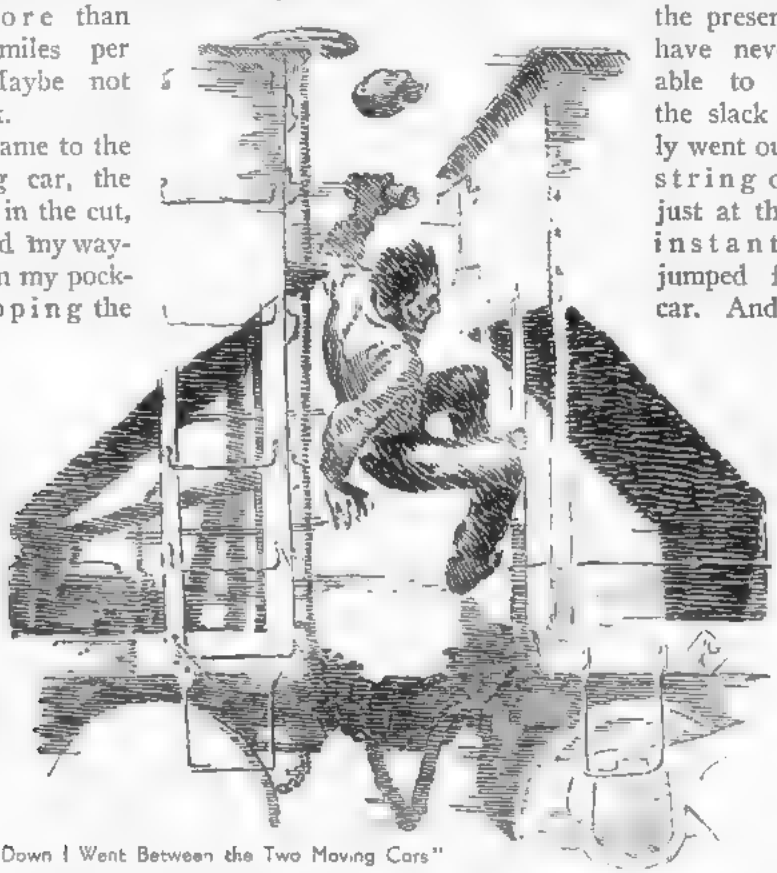
Well and good. It was a good arrangement, and I always sorted my waybills on the way down, while I crawled up over the sand and gravel from the rear of the cut up to the lead car. That brought me up to the front, where I could hop off when we got down below, throw the scale track switch and let Baldy and the ground crew shove 'em onto the scales, one by one.

But to-day things happened differently.

After Baldy had given the cut a kick I crawled up over the side of the car

that was the last out in the string and began working my way up over the washed gravel to the next car ahead. As they rolled down the grade the cars gradually picked up speed, although at their highest rate they probably never went more than fifteen miles per hour. Maybe not even that.

As I came to the adjoining car, the fifteenth in the cut, I removed my waybills from my pocket. Slipping the thick rubber band off them I stepped up to the steel ridge on the end of the car, gauged the distance carefully and leaped across the intervening space to the next one. I landed safely in the sand. Trudging across the sand I came to the next and did likewise. And I did the same with all the rest.



"Down I Went Between the Two Moving Cars"

That is, all except the last one. By this time I had sorted the bills, putting them into the order in which I knew the cars to be standing, so that we'd be ready to pull out of the yard with our train, right on schedule—and had replaced the rubber band. I paused for a second or so between the last two cars, or, rather, between the first two—and leaped.

For some reason that up until even the present day I have never been able to explain, the slack suddenly went out of the string of loads, just at the very instant that I jumped for that car. And it was just enough for me to miss my guess and to lose my footing. Down I went, between the two moving cars.

Why, I don't know, but I clung to those waybills. I merely mention that in passing. Strange to say, as I hurtled down between those cars, somehow clearing the couplings without even touching them, I didn't see a panoramic display of everything that had occurred during my life—as they say you nearly always do when you are going to your death, and are fully aware of it.

No, I saw nothing but those grinding wheels, screeching and crunching against the rails, relentless wheels that I knew could cut almost as cleanly as a surgeon's knife. I knew all about that. I had seen a pal's leg clipped neatly off years ago.

With arms and legs flailing madly I fell beneath the cars, but, luckily, *between* the rails! I stiffened as straight as an oaken board, face up, but the brake beam caught my blouse above my belt. I guess it was then that I let loose of the waybills, for I found myself clutching like a maniac for something to prevent my body from being forcibly rolled up into a ball and crushed to a pulp against the cinders.

My outstretched arms must have held me flat, because I could feel myself skidding along against the roadbed. After that everything seemed so hazy. I couldn't think straight. It all was like some crazy dream. Yet it shouldn't have seemed like that. Those groaning wheels, dripping water that had trickled down from the washed gravel, were squawking out their death songs on either side of me.

I tried to convince myself that it was actually a silly dream and that I was lying at home in bed. But the cars, moving faster and faster as they went down the grade, swaying as the heavy loads shouldered their way from side to side, told me otherwise. And the cinders biting through into my back brought me to the stark realization of my sorry plight.

My shirt was torn to shreds. I could feel the sleeves, in tatters now, ripping themselves away from my bleeding arms. My shoes were torn off. In another second my heavy socks were ribboned and I could feel the jagged cinders lacerating the tender skin. It seemed as if some fiend was holding branding irons against the raw soles; as if the toes were being pulled out one by one.

But the pain in my back was unbearable. As the cars dragged me on and on I forgot the pain in my feet. I remember of groaning as I slid onward. Once a spike tilted up abruptly as my head struck it, and raked its rusty edge across my cheek, slicing a deep gash as it went. The warm crimson gushed out of the slit, oozing down the side of my neck. Some of it trickled into the corner of my mouth. I remember of tasting the salty stuff.

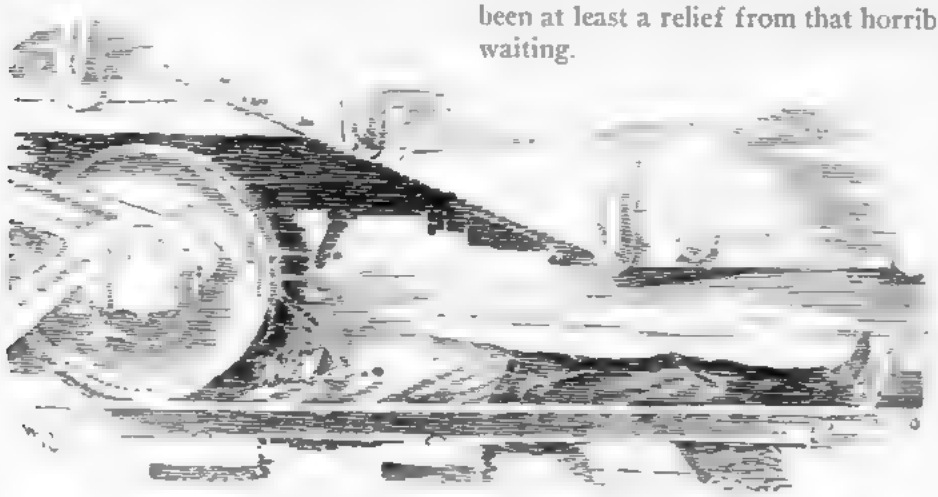
I would almost be willing to swear that I was dragged ten miles beneath those coasting cars, yet I know down deep within me that I wasn't actually carried along more than two hundred yards.

Once my head hit something and I guess I must have been unconscious for a short length of time, for there is a blank space in my memory there. But when I came to again I was in the very same predicament, only worse. The cars were rolling faster. Why didn't that lousy Baldy catch up and stop these cursed things? That question whirled through my head a thousand times if once. But it didn't help matters any. If I expected to get out at all I'd have to help myself.

Without warning, the brake beam released me, dropped me. The cars moved over without touching me! I have since figured out why that happened: The stretch over which I had just been dragged had been ashed freshly about three days before. But at this particular point where the brake beam had released its grip the section men had ceased ashing. South of here the roadbed lay two inches lower! And now the cars were clearing me!

But with this new development my

horror became more intense. Was that the lowest point in that entire string of cars or would some other car pick me up again, and grind me finally to death against those cinders or beneath the wheels? I could only lie perfectly still and wait. No doughboy in the war ever flattened himself any closer to the ground than I did.



"I Could Feel the Wind of the Cars as They Moved Onward"

I could feel the wind of the cars as they moved onward, just a few scant inches above my face. Axles, turning and turning, rolled over me. Air hoses, shaking hands awkwardly, passed over. The steps on the ends of the cars, the steel strap steps, moved by tantalizingly near. I scarcely breathed, fearing that a breath might raise my chest to within a grappling distance.

I never knew that the bottoms of hoppers and gondolas were so gigantic. Each looked like some huge monster, slipping howlingly over me, ready to pounce on me and tear me to pieces if I as much as twitched a muscle. And then a gust of wind blew a handful of dust and dirt into my eyes. The natural impulse was to rub them, but I was helpless to move. I could only wait.

From then on I saw nothing. Tears rolled out of the corners of my eyes and mingled with the blood on my face. I could only lie still and suffer. It was like living a life a thousand times worse than death itself. Death would have been at least a relief from that horrible waiting.

How long I lay there I don't know, but I do know that I couldn't force myself to lift my head, even long after the last car had rolled over me. I still felt that to move was to die, to die in a cruel manner. So it was many, many minutes after that drag of gravel and sand had passed beyond me that I finally lifted my head.

It was agony for me to rub my eyes. They smarted burningly. My back was a mass of raw flesh, cut and clawed hideously. Bits of my shirt, pieces of cinders, slivers of glass and wood were buried deep in the skin. And when the afternoon sun, glaring down like a ball of molten gold from the cloudless sky, burned against my back I seemed to be floating about as if in a dream.

I could feel nothing now. My body was absolutely numb. I crawled to my bare, lacerated feet and began to walk up the track to the north. There was

only one thing on my mind: Find those bills you've lost and hurry down to make up your train. Number Seventeen is due in half an hour. You're late.

And that's where they found me: Gathering up the halves of my lost, wind-scattered waybills. The cars had cut the packet squarely into two parts. I had found nearly half of them when Baldy came shooting down the main in the locomotive. And that's all I remember there.

It was fourteen weeks before I really got out of bed again. All the skin had been scraped off my back. Three ribs had been cracked, and there is a nasty scar on my cheek to-day. But I had always had good health and I pulled through okay.

Did I quit railroading and go in for something less adventuresome? Well, you birds here know. If that would have singed my nerve I wouldn't be still playing the game. A fellow who has spent a neat little chunk of his life pushing cars up and down the old ribbons doesn't jump out of it so easily.

Say, Mack, why don't you jump the neck of that runt of a bill clerk and make him get those bills out for you? Give him hell, Mack, give him hell!

Close Tracks

Disaster Lurked and Faded When John Highballed the Down Grade with Nine Points on the Rheostat

By R. Franklin Hall

AT the age of twenty, by virtue of the fact that my father was a close friend of the division superintendent and a pretty heavy stockholder in the company, I was ticket agent, sub-station operator and express agent at the little town of Plainsides on an electric interurban line in Texas.

The line had been in operation two years, and extended from the city of Deland south through a rich farming country, sixty miles, to Wallas. I lived in Wallas and deadheaded back and forth to Plainsides, twenty miles up the line. The night man lived in Plainsides and relieved me in time to catch the limited—407—for home.

These limited cars—three each way—had been put in operation during the summer to meet the popular demand for fast travel, connecting with steam roads at both ends of the line. They were long, low, steel cars, geared higher than the locals, and capable of great speed after gaining headway. They had only one scheduled stop—at McLeod, halfway on the run. Clearances were handed them on the fly by means of the loop at order points. If it became necessary to take an order the crew had to receive it in person over the telephone.

I usually stopped 407 by the simple procedure of not having the loop ready. Other times they would generally stop for me, unless they were pushed for

time, in which case I would not bother them, and they would not bother to stop. They had a schedule of nearly a mile-a-minute.

The State Fair was in progress at Deland and all trains were running behind schedule. This meant that all had to call the dispatcher for orders at meeting points; no clearances were given. The cars were jammed with people going home from the Fair. The company had hauled out all the stored equipment to meet this enormous traffic, and several extras were flagging behind the locals. Two express and baggage cars were working northward against the late afternoon traffic, but could not make much headway. No orders were given them; they would make a siding, call the dispatcher, ask about the next southbound car and upon being told its location would go against it only so far as to be able to clear at a siding by at least seven minutes.

407 was due at Plainsides at 7.10 P.M. The dispatcher called me at 7.15 and asked if I had any knowledge of No. 52—one of the northbound express cars. He said that the crew of the express had called him from Hurt at 7.01 and asked about 407. He said he was afraid they would try to make Plainsides and go in the hole there for the limited, but he didn't think they could make it, as 407 had made up some time and right now she should be showing up north of town. Hurt Siding was seven miles south of Plainsides.

The limited ground to a stop in front of the station at 7.20 and the crew came in for orders. Mr. Loftman, the superintendent, came in with them. He usually rode the line all day when traffic was heavy. When the crew received their orders he talked to the dispatcher briefly. In answer to something the dispatcher said I heard him say that he did not think 52 would try to make Plainsides before 407, but he seemed a little concerned about it as we boarded the car.

I followed Mr. Loftman on through the cab into the front passenger compartment. There were no vacant seats, so we stood near the cab door. The motorman's cab was a walled-in room occupying the left side of the first six feet of the car.

Mr. Loftman turned to me as the motorman was climbing into the cab and said:

"You still want to break in on the front end, John?"

"I'd rather pull one of these cars than do anything else in the world," I said.

"Come in here and let me see you do your stuff," he said, going into the cab.

I followed him in. The motorman, having received two bells from the conductor on the back end of the car, was just preparing to release the air when we entered.

"Let John pull her to Wallas, Rutsom; you may ride with the passengers."

The motorman turned the controller over to me without a word and, after a moment or so, left the cab. He was an old man on the road and the boss never had to repeat an order to him.

Mr. Loftman was well aware of my ability as a motorman, as I had worked the extra board for a while before taking the job in the station. I had always wanted to go back, but father and Mr. Loftman both discouraged me, saying there was no future to such a life. I was now almost overcome with excitement. To allow me to take the controller on a limited and a hot schedule certainly bespoke confidence in my ability.

I sat down on the stool, placed my hand on the safety button and pulled her onto the first point. The superintendent stood up behind me, ready, I guess, to take the controller if I made a bobble.

The car moved quickly and smoothly forward and began to climb the three per cent grade that leads upward — six hundred yards—to the edge of town. After topping this rise the track drops away in the longest grade on the line — a long downhill run that has a reverse curve at its bottom—in the woods along Rowena Creek, four miles away. These curves were not of such sharpness but that they could be taken about as fast as the cars would move. And they would move, too, after this long, straight, downhill drive.

Five Hundred Yards! And the 407 Traveling Over a Hundred Feet Per Second

Rowena Creek was about the only place on the entire line that opposing headlights would not show at night in time to prevent a smash-up. Cars approaching each other from opposite directions had never met on this particular stretch, owing, chiefly, to the fact that all were afraid of it and were extra careful here. Many times the boys had, for some reason or another, overrun orders on various parts of the line, but always the other car would be seen in time to prevent going together. The H. & R. B. Railway paralleled the interurban on the east from Plainsides to Wallas.

We were carrying eighty-two passengers out of Plainsides, so I made the top of the rise on five points. As she began to pick up on the down-grade I pulled the controller gradually around to nine. The hum of the motors rose to a high, faint whine, and 407 was clicking off the rail-joints—going south.

Traveling on nine we went down that hill like a star in the night, and banked screaming into the first curve at close to eighty miles an hour. Mr. Loftman never said a word, but stood silently behind my seat. My speed, while great, was not exceptional. All made it that could. This was about the only place on the line where a minute could be picked up on the schedule in a five mile run.

Halfway round the first curve I was startled to the depth of my being by the sudden reflection of a headlight on the telegraph wires around the curve ahead. Before I had even time to act she came into view—flaring around the other curve.

Five hundred yards; and 407 traveling over a hundred feet per second. Like us, the other car had come down a long grade, and must be making around sixty. Less than ten seconds would put us together. Naturally, I didn't figure this out at the time, but in a flash I knew that we would be together before the speed of either car could hardly be checked. With one motion I released the button and put her in the big hole.

For one short moment I thought the wheels would hold the rails, but almost at once I felt the forward lurch and knew that we were searing down the track with locked wheels. From behind me Mr Loftman screamed

"Oh! My God, fifty-two."

I released the brake and threw the reverse lever. Without waiting for the air to run down I pulled her onto the first point.

When a car is moving ahead it takes a tremendous amount of current to reverse her and apply the juice while still moving. A breaker cut-out is placed in the line, usually overhead in the cab, to meet just such a drain on the juice, which, if no such an appliance were present, might seriously damage the motors. If the sudden surge of the current is too great the breaker flies out and the car will not run till it is thrown back in place again.

The breaker and all fuses held, and the quick diminishing speed of the car threw Mr. Loftman forward on top of me, pressing my face down so that I could not see.

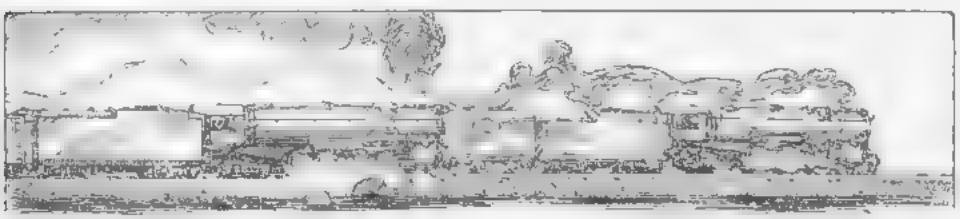
Through our horrified minds was flashing the same thought: that most of the eighty-two happy passengers aboard would, in a moment, be instantly killed by the terrific impact of the two cars—sent to eternity by the hands they trusted. I knew that death was upon me. We did not have time to leave the cab had we so desired.

I pulled the controller onto the second point. Still the breaker held and I could feel the car slow perceptibly. Instantly I pulled it around to five. The breaker went out with a blinding crash and 407 drifted into the night at sixty miles an hour. The headlight from the oncoming car flashed square in my eyes. I closed them tightly and waited for the end.

One long moment — too long. I raised my head for a look. A passenger train was going north on the H. & R. B., lights in the car windows flickering as she passed swiftly around the curve and out of sight. She had met us right in the middle of the reverse curves, and it was her headlight we saw, the tracks being so close together that it appeared to be on the interurban line on account of these curves.

I brought the car to a stop with the air and threw in the breaker. Mr. Loftman was sitting on the floor of the cab weeping. I was so weak that I was unable to grasp the reverse with a strong enough grip to turn it. The conductor opened the cab door and said:

"What in the Sam Hill did you stop for, John?"



The Bridge That Takes Years in the Painting

One Big Paint Job

It Takes Three Years for a Crew to Cover the World's Greatest Railroad Bridge Just Once

By Earle W. Gage

A NEVER-ENDING titanic task is the lot of the maintenance gangs of the Canadian National Railways, charged with the job of keeping the world's longest and largest railroad bridge coated with gleaming paint. Like the poor, this job is always with the men, since it requires three years to complete one coat of paint, when it is time to start all over again. There's nothing like it in railroading.

Spanning the majestic and historical St. Lawrence River, the Quebec Bridge presents to C. N. R. crews the most extensive refurbishing job that has ever confronted railroaders. It's quite like rolling all the bridges of many systems up into one great ball of steel. Both in length and towering height, the old Quebec span presents problems peculiar to itself, which the maintenance men have solved as the result of continuous labor on the bridge.

Just suppose your boss handed you a ticket to spread 7,500 gallons—that's 30,000 quarts—of paint on a bridge! Well, it would take your breath, until

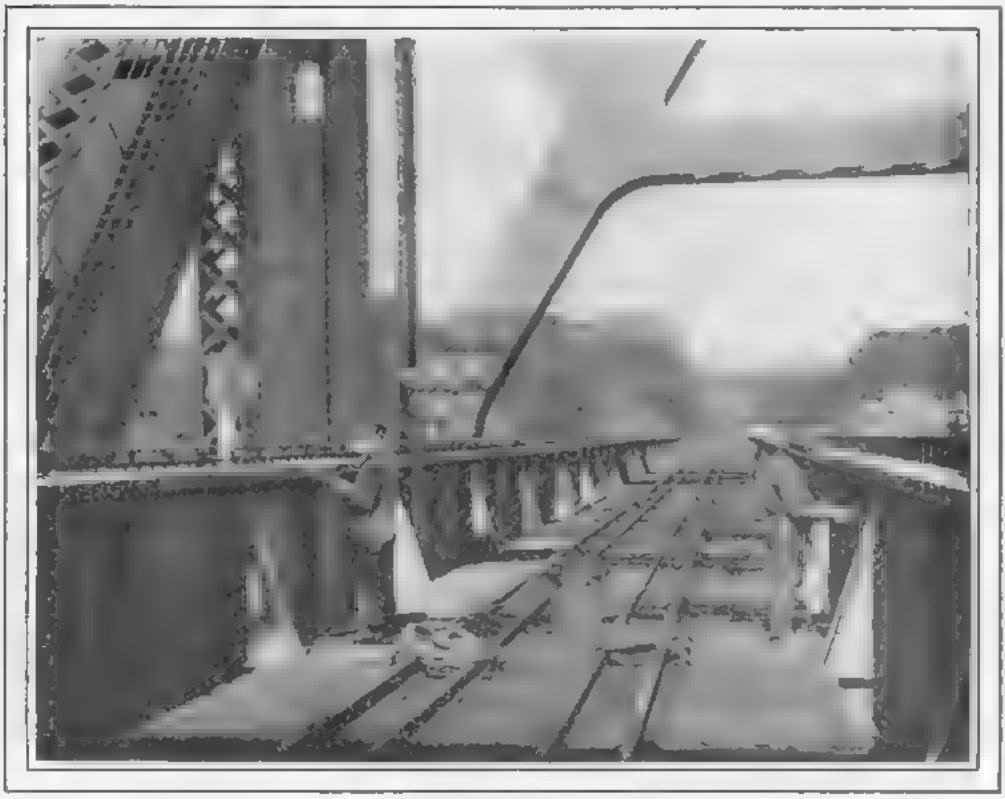
you became familiar with the marvelous mechanical assistants which are used in writing this epic paint job into American railroad history.

Furthermore, suppose that you had to keep right on spreading that amount of paint, year after year. To the master painter, anxious to secure a profitable contract, it might sound attractive, until he discovered that he would need to crawl and hang two hundred and three hundred feet up over a broad, dangerous river, as he brushed rust off and paint onto the giant steel framework. Then he might think more of his skin than his pocketbook, and, like many another, just turn the job down.

These C. N. R. boys are obliged to become real sky-pilots, crawling up slanting, slippery steelwork, as they toil high above the river, as high winds sweep down the broad valley and rage about the girders, whistling many a suggestive and plaintive tune of dismay, which would frighten men less bold and experienced.

Nowhere are men confronted with the same numerous handicaps as on this job. Climatic conditions are, for most of the year, counter to the application of paint. The season in which the gangs are able to work is limited to a few weeks, which may still further be reduced due to the changeable weather and a heavy mantle of fogs and mists which enshroud the great structure for days on end. Only by the adoption of the most advanced mechanical methods of painting were the men able to overcome these obstacles.

The big job is under the personal



Slow Work, But Thorough

direction of C. P. Disney, bridge engineer of the Canadian National Railways, with headquarters in Toronto, who is in charge of the bridge building and maintenance work of the Central Division. L. C. Dupuis, divisional engineer, and Bridge Master Piton, at Levis, Quebec, are the faithful lieutenants under whose supervision the bridge receives its coat of paint.

Besides applying a lake of paint onto the steelwork of the main structure, to complete a single coat, it requires 70 gallons to cover, once over, each of the four main supporting posts, or 280 gallons in all for these. To apply a single coat of paint to the entire bridge structure necessitates the united effort of a crew of thirty-five men, toiling steadily from the middle of June to the middle of September of each summer, for three years. At the same time the paint gangs proceed with their work, the inspectors and mechanics are going over every square inch of the structure, carefully inspecting, greasing and oiling all moveable parts, to stay the hand of rust, and replacing any worn parts.

High Above the Water With the Spray Guns

Despite the continued progress in the art of bridge building, and the numerous recent achievements written into history, as engineers have thrown gigantic bridges across rivers, the famous Quebec Bridge remains the eighth wonder of the railroading world, and stands supreme in this field of engineering. Not alone because of its excessive length, but likewise, due to the almost unsurmountable obstacles which the builders faced in its final fabrication, this bridge is still in a class by itself

The largest cantilever bridge in the world, with the longest and by far the heaviest span of any bridge yet constructed by man, the Quebec Bridge is a monument to the genius of its builders, as well as a perplexing problem to the Canadian National Railway. It

stretches 2,830 feet from shore to shore of the St. Lawrence, or more than a half mile, and its central span, from pier to pier, is 1,800 feet in length Beneath this span pass the transatlantic greyhounds plying between Montreal and Europe. Canadian National Railway trains operating between Montreal and Quebec cross the bridge

Thrown across the structure are two pairs of steel ribbons, on thirty-two foot centers; two five-foot sidewalks and a motor bridge, which is between the railroad tracks. It is thus, unique among great bridges located in a similar site, a triple transport link, modern in every respect.

Few greater engineering masterpieces were born in greater tragedy, or tragedies, than the Quebec Bridge Twice the hopes for success in its completion were dashed into the waters of the St. Lawrence. In 1907, just as the engineers were ready to erect the first span, it dropped and killed nearly one hundred laborers; again, in 1916, as the vast central span was being slowly raised into position, it fell and killed several more men. The steelwork used in fabricating the bridge totalled 66,480 tons, so assembled that the heaviest Santa Fe type locomotives, weighing 655,000 pounds, pass over the bridge, pulling long trains, with an ample margin of safety.

Railroaders recognize the maintenance of this bridge as the outstanding example of such work. There is nowhere, in any field, a task to compare with the painting. The problems of extreme climatic conditions may be seen in the wide range of temperatures—90 degrees maximum and 31 degrees below zero minimum—to which it is subjected. Special paint mixtures are necessary to combat natural enemies.

The surrounding atmosphere is frequently moist and foggy, and dew oftimes remains on the steelwork until near the noon hour, even in August. This means that the paint crews must toil energetically in "spreading" in the few remaining hours before sunset and night dew. Working in high winds, it is doubly necessary that the workmen "stick to their jobs."

Unbelievable as it may seem, prior to the introduction of the modern compressed-air paint spraying apparatus, gangs of railroaders were accustomed to brush paint onto this large bridge. Gangs of from eighteen to thirty men went after a section and worked all summer long as busy as bees. Unlike many another efficiency campaign, the introduction of the improved apparatus did not cost a man a job, for the maintenance boss put on more men, thus completing the work sooner. The force was doubled, which permitted of doubling the quantity and greatly improving the quality of the work.

The apparatus used consists of spray-guns of the latest design, a heavy-duty, gasoline-driven air compressor, air operated winch and pressuretype paint container. Five two-men, fourteen-gallon pressure outfits are kept busy to supply the ten sprayers used, and each sprayer has a helper to assist. The men wear masks to keep the paint from being blown into their faces

Aside from the spray gang, there are helpers, scaffold tenders, blacksmith and boattender.

It cost a little over seven dollars per gallon to apply the paint by hand-brush method, which has been reduced to less than five dollars with the compressed air machines. These figures include labor, material and equipment, which indicate a great saving.

Over the Hill

By Charles Hunt

FROST upon the headlight, snowflakes in the air,
Storming in the cañon, winter everywhere;
Engine's working harder with a muffled roar,
Tallowpot on the deck feeling kind of sore—
Wishes he could marry rich, wouldn't work no more.
Hoghead is a singing, nothing on his mind;
If they lag around the curves, cuss the man behind.
Man behind is sleeping on a cozy bed,
If she lags around the curves, cuss the man ahead.
Conductor in the cupola, nodding unawares;
Boomer in the box car, counting *hobo* fares.

Then the playful compound snaps the train in two,
Just to give the boomer something else to do;
Brakeman in a passion drags a frozen chain
Twenty car lengths in the snow, swearing might and
main,
Ties the train together like a broken string,
My, to be a boomer 'tis a joyful thing.
Slower turn the wheels then they slip and stand—
Head man out of water, hind man out of sand;
Only halfway to the top, trouble just begun,
That's the way we make the hump with nineteen
hundred ton.

He Wound His Way Through the Bushes to the Tree Where His Horse Had Been Tied

Blood and Steam

Joe Allen Sees a Dream Come True as the Shadow of Feudal Death Is Lifted From the Right of Way

By Don Waters

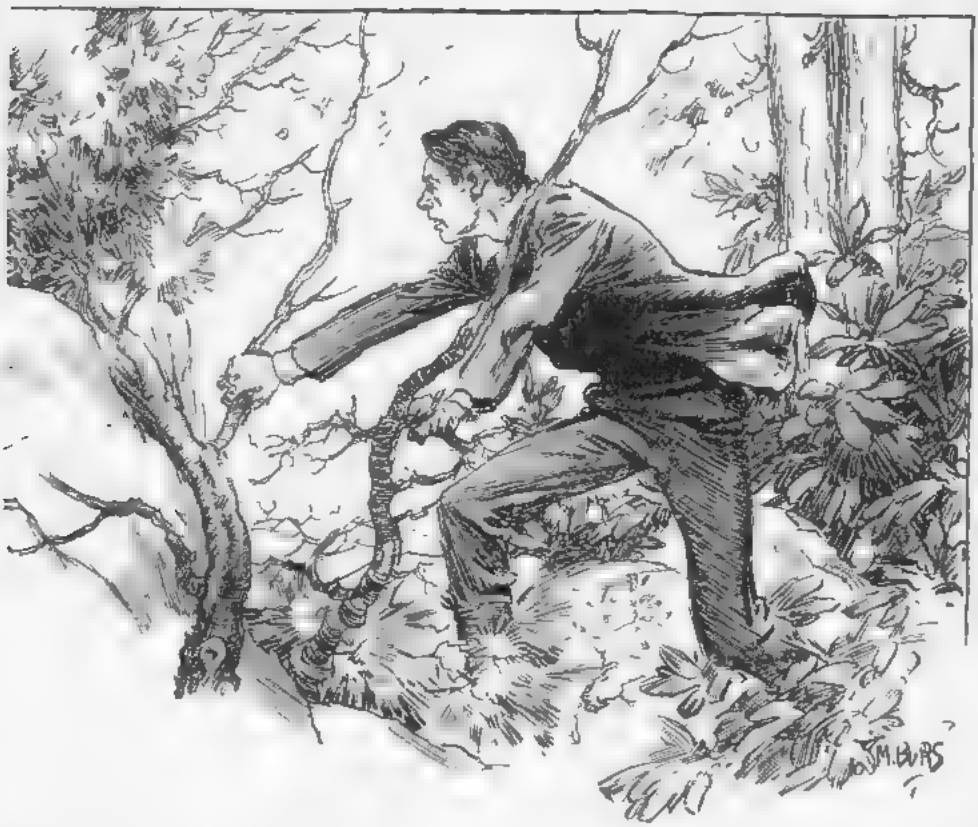
WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

JOE ALLEN, fireman, and Crab McAllister, engineman, are disciplined for infractions of engine rules, with a choice of thirty days without pay or thirty days on the Slabtown local after Upson, the super's chief clerk, had chimed in on the hearing. Jack Eagle, a senior engineer, had introduced Joe Allen to his daughter, June, much to Upson's disgust. Upson shows hostility toward Joe for this.

Joe is called home to find his family in the midst of an old feud that is being stirred up by Sneed Cowsie, a relative of Upson, who suddenly wants to get possession of the Allen home place. Joe returns to the division and Belnap, the special agent, tells him to keep his eyes open for train robberies in the vicinity of Slabtown. Joe heads into a robbery in time to get his skull creased. The robbers put him on an outgoing train, but he climbs off at a deserted telegraph station and informs the dispatcher. He returns to the terminal and is invited to June Eagle's house for dinner.

Sneed Cowsie had shot at Joe's father, and Joe is again called home. He refrains from shooting Cowsie, however, and returns to take his run to Slabtown. In Slabtown he meets Mary Lee Cowsie, who strikes him in his loneliness.

Jack Eagle persuades Joe to sign up



regularly on the Slabtown local. Then Joe sees No. 93 is wrecked, and Joe is led to believe that car robbers are responsible. The next day, as he is returning to the division point, some one takes a pot shot at the engine crew. This was incentive enough for McAllister to sign off. Joe goes to the super and makes it plain that he suspects inside information from the terminal is linked with the Slabtown robberies.

Joe does not disclose his suspicions to the "super," but he tells Upson a few things as he is leaving.

That evening Joe dines at the Eagle home and proposes to June, who accepts, then breaks off with him the next morning when she finds Joe carrying a gun. That night Joe meets Mary Lee at Slabtown and Joe almost asks her to marry him when Sneed appears, and Joe hides for Mary Lee's sake.

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THE next morning, when leaving time came, Joe looked back toward the caboose for the conductor's go-ahead signal. He saw Mary Lee standing beside the tank, only a few feet away. Her black eyes were shining, her red lips parted. She touched her finger tips to her lips.

Crab's voice came from the other side of the cab.

"I see you've not been idle, Nervy!" he observed, chuckling.

"Go ahead," Joe replied. "Go ahead. They're all aboard, and everything is pretty."

Crab opened up on the throttle. As the engine moved away, he laughed

"This day, and I'm done here," he said. "How about you, Nervy?"

Although Crab was grinning, Joe answered seriously.

"I don't know. You've got it on me. You have the age, and can pick and choose your runs, while I've got to take what others don't want."

Once back at the terminal that morning, the force of his own words struck Joe again; for the Slabtown local was still on the board. No one had bid in the run. The superintendent, standing in front of the station, called to him as he crossed the yards.

"Hey, Allen, I'd like to talk to you!"

Joe went over toward him.

"How would you like to be promoted? Do you think you're competent to go up for the examination?"

"What?" Joe gasped. "Why—why, colonel, I'm not due for promotion. There's a lot of fellows ahead of me. They'll all have to take the examination before I get my chance."

"I know all that, but there's an opportunity open for you to drive an engine. Will you take it?"

"Just try me!" Joe replied, scarce able to voice the words.

Two hours later Joe Allen sat in the superintendent's office, opposite the master mechanic, who had come up from the big shops at the other end of the division that morning. The day of which Joe had dreamed so long had come without warning. This thing so much desired, this hope for the far future, was within his grasp. He had jumped scores of numbers on the "age" list.

The examination was easy. Joe traced the flow of the air through the governors into the main reservoir, through the engineer's brake valve into the train line and car triple valves, past the car reservoirs into the brake cylinders. He told of the passage of steam from the dome and throttle, checked the lead and lap on the valves, spoke of cut-off and expansion.

The things he had studied in the books were standing him in good stead now. The headlight circuit, the intricate technicalities of electricity and magnetism, of E. M. F., of flux and resistance—Joe had learned them all. His confidence came back to him. He "put an engine on one side," blocked the valve stem, closed the ports, disconnected rods, and wedged the crosshead, as if it were a familiar operation. He answered questions on the book of rules. He knew the schedule of the movement of trains from many an hour's study of the time-table.

The master mechanic finished his questioning and glanced at the written sheet that Joe had filled out. He reached across the table and shook Joe's hand warmly.

"Allen, you've sure got the stuff," he said. "I wish half of the fellows driving engines knew what you do!"

In a daze, Joe saw the superintendent lift the telephone receiver off the hook, and heard him say:

"Call office."

A moment later his heart beat fast when the colonel spoke into the little black mouthpiece of the telephone.

"Mark Joe Allen up for engine driver on No. 20 to-night. He's taken the job regular. Yes, the Slabtown local. Get another fireman for it."

The colonel looked at Joe's flushed, pleased countenance.

"All right, Allen, I told you I'd see you through. You're no man's fool. I guess you suspect why I wanted you to go on that run. You see, Allen,"

the colonel explained, "you're the leading engineer out of Glen Cove now. You've established your seniority, and I don't think it will be questioned seriously, no matter what happens."

Joe thanked them both. As he went out of the office, he glanced in casually through the open door to where Upson sat before his desk. The clerk looked up. There was a half sneer on his face that made Joe angry, and he was angrier yet when Upson said sarcastically:

"Well, I hope you didn't find it too hard, Allen."

"I've gone through lots of harder things," replied Joe, and smiled complacently, his anger disappearing.

"So you're an engineer now!" Upson's manner was aggravating. It changed to one of studied hostility when he added: "Little good it 'll do you!"

Joe merely laughed, turned, and walked away, his mind all awhirl. This promotion had come on him so suddenly and unexpectedly that he hardly knew what to think, and Upson's malicious words were soon forgotten.

His first impulse was to call Jack Eagle and tell him about it. He was an engineer now, carrying the same rating as Jack. He had just been promoted, yet it did not seem to be such an all-important matter. There were other things in life that were far more desirable.

At that moment Joe Allen would have gladly gone back to where he started if, in return, he could have received one thing. He felt a great desire to see June; but that was impossible. He had no excuse for going to her house.

The next best thing was to hear her. Downstairs, in the pay booth, he hesitated a moment. Then he called the number and dropped a coin.

"Hello!" said June's voice. She recognized him immediately. "Hello, Joe! Dad's out somewhere."

He felt the coolness in her tone, and knew that she wished to end the conversation. Twice he attempted to get her to talk, but he received only monosyllabic answers.

"Well, I must be getting along," he finally stated. "June, please tell your father that I've just been promoted to engineer. I've got to get over to the roundhouse to see that my engine is in good shape."

He knew it was pure "dog" that he was putting on, but he couldn't resist the temptation. He had to grin himself as he said it.

He heard June's surprised gasp.

"Congratulations, Joe, on your promotion," she said, her voice a little shaken.

As he said "Good-by," he knew that in spite of what had occurred, June Eagle had not put him from her thoughts.

XXI

From half a dozen car lengths back, the conductor flung up his hand and shouted:

"Pull her tail, Nervy, and let's hear her grunt!"

Engine No. 81 coughed and stuttered, her drivers took hold, she stretched the slack out of the drawbars, and train No. 20 got under way.

Joe Allen leaned out of the right-hand cab window and looked back to where the special agent was just clambering up into the caboose. A switchman lined up the switch ahead, took off his cap, and bowed with an exaggerated politeness.

"This way out!" he called.

When the engine passed, he tossed a newspaper done up like a bouquet, a cornucopia wrapped around a bundle of greasy waste, into the gangway.

A switch engine, the crew grinning broadly, its whistle tooting, drove past on another track. They were ragging Joe, but little he cared. He paid no attention to the grins and yells of the operators at the interlocking tower, who pointed shaking fingers at the 81's tank as she approached. Joe had seen what was chalked on both sides that afternoon when he got aboard over at the coal chute. Some joker had stenciled neatly on the right side of the tank, with chalked letters six inches high:

SLABTOWN LIMITED

On the fireman's side the same humorist had printed:

WOODEN AXLE EXPRESS

Joe had seen the crowd near the roundhouse watching him. They were all ready to give him a laugh when he wiped off those inscriptions; but he had disappointed them. He had paid no attention to their jokes. He had learned to grin and take them, to watch his chance and get even. He had learned that a man on that railroad who couldn't take a joke was due for some uncomfortable times.

Passing the interlocking tower, he casually waved a greeting, jerked the whistle cord, *boot, boot,* in reply, as if nothing out of the ordinary was transpiring, and drove on.

His fireman, a colored man, looked across. The darky was an old hand who had been on the road for years.

"Cap'n, yo' shore did git by dem neatly! If yo' had come back at dem, dey'd shore ride yo'. Dey likes to get some one a ravin', but we doan' mind dem trash nohow," he concluded. "We goes our way widout seein' dem at all."

Joe could not repress a grin, however, when at the first stop, at a siding, the fireman got down with a piece of greasy waste and wiped the chalk marks off.

At Glen Cove, where they took on water, the pump man climbed up into the 81's cab.

"Well, well, Joey!" he shouted, grabbing Joe's hand. "Well, well! So you made the grade! I'm sure proud of you. I used to tell how you were a comer. Remember how I tipped you off? I was just telling Flat Wheel Wells, the other day, as how you'd be taking his job some of these times; and here you are, the youngest hoghead on the division, and, if I'm right, the youngest on the whole system. I'm sure proud of you!"

Joe, a bit embarrassed, laughed

"Now, Bill, don't puff me up too much. I've made the grade so far. I've got the right to jerk a throttle, but that's all. I've got to do my work, I've got to hold that job myself, or the colonel will bump me off it just as quick as he set me on."

The negro fireman clambered down off the coal from the back of the tank Joe glanced ahead. The brakeman had thrown the switch and was giving him a highball.

"So long, Bill! I'll see you in the morning. I got to pull my freight now."

The old pump man was reluctant to leave.

"Say, Joey," he cautioned. "keep your eyes peeled. I been hearing things. That Cowsie fellow is still hanging around Slabtown. He's swearing high and low he's not through with you; so don't expose yourself, or—"

The pump man hesitated. There was

real feeling in his voice when he concluded:

"Joe, I'd sure feel terrible if anything should happen to you. You know I advised you to start railroading."

Joe laughed

"Oh, don't worry, Bill! I'm big enough to take care of myself. Besides, as you know, I've got a whole shanty full of guards back there on the rear of this string."

The pump man's lip curled scornfully.

"Aw, them flat-footed bum chasers! They couldn't catch a cold! Sneed's been dodging in and out among them for weeks, and they've never seen him. Don't you depend on them, Joe. You bushwhack that guy the first chance you get. You'd be in the clear, for he's threatened you, and everybody knows it was him took that shot at you. You got a perfect right to sling a couple of slugs into him. Don't depend on Belnap and his bunch. They ain't much, or they'd 'a' collared Sneed long before now; and these guys who've been lifting all the stuff off the company, from what I hear, they've never got the slightest trace of 'em."

The 81 was gathering speed when the pump man slung himself off. Joe waved his hand.

"So long, Bill!" he called, with an airiness that he was far from feeling.

Bill was right, he knew, yet there was no way out. It was characteristic of him that the idea of quitting the job never entered his mind. It would take more than the threat of a hidden assassin to drive Joe Allen off the Slabtown local.

His fireman, who had overheard the conversation, made several tentative approaches before he finally blurted out the question:

"What all dis mean, cap'n, 'bout dis heah Cowsie man, and guards, and watchin' out?"

"Oh, it's nothing," replied Joe. "Some fellow who has it in for me took a couple of pot shots at the engine the other day. He'll not repeat it. The colonel has half a dozen deputies riding the train, and you need have no fear."

The darky put in a fire, stood surveying the handle of his shovel for a few minutes, and scratched his woolly head. Then he muttered, as if talking to himself:

"No, sah, I ain't got no fear, but now I knows what dat derrick cook means when he say to me over at de roundhouse, 'I'll be seein' yo' tonight!' He knows I doan' hang 'round whar guns go off careless!"

As dusk was falling, Joe reached up and turned on the headlight machine. Then he threw the switch over his head, and the globes in the cab burst into incandescence. As he let himself down, his jumper caught in the reverse lever and lifted up. The fireman saw the grip of the pistol sticking out of the engineer's back overall pocket. He made no reference to what he had seen, although a thoughtful expression settled on his wrinkled face.

The 81 drove leisurely along for a few miles before the darky spoke

"Cap'n," he said, "if it's all right wid yo', I'd just as soon dat yo' turn off dose heah cab lights. Yo' see, cap'n, I doan' need dem to see inside dat fire box, and shorely yo' doan' need dem to see outside, 'case dat headlight, it's a shinin'."

Joe nodded, and a smile crossed his face

"You're right! We won't be such a fair target in a dark cab. Leastwise you'll be hard to see."

The fireman batted his eyes.

"Yassah, yassah, cap'n. I ain't never thought 'bout dat."

Joe's smile widened into a laugh.

"Never mind, old man, no one's gunning for you."

He laughed still louder at the fireman's reply:

"Nossah, but bullets got no eyes. 'Sides dat, dey color-blind as well."

A few minutes later a negro brakeman came over the tops of the cars and sat down in front of the fireman's seat box. The two darkies held a whispered conversation, and Joe was not surprised when, a few miles from the end of the run, the fireman said, as if the thought had just occurred to him.

"Cap'n, if it's all right wid yo', I'll just sorter slide off down to Yaller Hill when de rest of de crew's goin'. I'll be back wid dem in de mawnin', cap'n. I'll be heah in plenty time to get de 81 ready to go back."

Joe agreed.

"It didn't take you fellows long to get on to the tricks of this run, did it?"

When No. 20 came to a stop at the sawmill, Joe saw the conductor and flagman lead the way along the path through the woods, while the brakeman and his fireman hurried after them, close behind.

Darkness fell, and the silver orb of the full moon rose majestically above the trees. A breeze sprang up from the southeast—a warm wind that rustled among the dried leaves and carried a hint of rain in it. Joe hoped that it would rain to-night, for the menace of fire was getting serious.

He stood beside the shanty car and looked up at the sky. The clouds were forming to the eastward. They carried the promise of brisk showers. The air felt muggy.

Joe left his train standing where it stopped, a little put out at the way the train crew had deserted. He would leave it there, letting them switch the empties off and hook on to the loads in the morning.

The deputies were gathered in the tool shanty, already interested in their nightly game of cards. Unless something occurred out here soon, Joe knew that they would be taken off. He went into the caboose, lit a lantern, and drew his sheaf of maps from his pocket. He took the precaution of hanging a newspaper over the nearest window. He spread one of the maps out on the table, traced a line across it with his fountain pen, figured on the edge of the sheet, and nodded, satisfied

"Of course, that's it!" he muttered. "It's less than half of one per cent grade, about five inches in a hundred feet. Not only that, but it will save almost eighty miles. I wonder—" He half rose, to tuck the newspaper up over the window. One corner had fallen down. "I wonder how soon—"

His sentence was unfinished.

"Whippoorwill! Whippoorwill!"

It was Mary Lee calling. He was quick to answer, and they sat down on a pile of timbers. As she moved close to him, he heard the rustle and crinkle of her dress. Instead of the calico gown that she usually wore, this dress was made of silk.

His voice was hard when he said:

"Mary Lee, where did you get that?"

"Now, Joey, ye hain't put out wi' me, air ye? I didn't want to take it from him, but he forced it on me. He give me a big bolt o' cloth. Hit war so purty, I jest couldn't resist hit. I knowed ye'd like the looks o' hit!"

From the light of the slab pile, he saw the shine of a new pair of high-heeled slippers on her feet.

"He gave you those, too?"

She nodded, unspeaking, and a strained pause followed.

"Joey," she said at length, "if ye say the word, I'll give them back to him the next time he comes. He brought a dozen pairs fer me to choose frum." Mary Lee leaned closer. "Honey bud, ye hain't mad with me, air ye? I wasn't anxious fer all this finery. He fair forced hit on me!"

Joe did not reply. He knew beyond any doubt where Sneed had got these things—that carload of shoes, that consignment of silk! Then like a flash it came over him that the half glimpsed silhouette of a man he had seen down in the yards that night was Sneed Cowsie. Sneed was one of the gang robbing box cars!

Another certainty grew strong in Joe. Of course this was the solution—Upson, in the superintendent's office, would know when these valuable consignments came through. He furnished the information; Sneed and a few others did the actual stealing. No wonder Upson could afford a flashy roadster! No wonder the chief clerk could sport a diamond pin and tailor-made clothes!

Joe rose and gently pushed Mary Lee's restraining hand from his arm. He wanted to get away from her and be where he could think. He asked her one question:

"Is Sneed around to-night?"

"Yes," she replied, fear in her tone. "He done tol' me he war comin' in some time to-night."

Joe started toward the shanty, where the special agents could be heard inside, laughing and joking. Mary Lee took a few steps after him.

"Joey," she called pleadingly, "please don't be so put out! I hain't carin' a thing fer Sneed. If I knowed ye wouldn't 'a' liked hit—" Her voice broke. "Joey, he's carryin' a gun. I'm feared fer ye!"

She turned and hurried away. Joe Allen knew that she was going to intercept Sneed, to try and keep him away, thinking that Joe's anger was directed against Sneed for making her presents.

His hand was hooked through the handle when he stopped. Should he do this? Should he be an informer? All his life he had heard that an informer, a bearer of tales, was a mean and despicable creature. He could not go against all his early training, although it was his duty, as an employee of the railroad, to take his information to the special agent. He could not bring Mary Lee into it, as he surely would if he told what he knew.

Leaving the shanty door, he went into the caboose and sat down at the table, on which the maps were still outspread, to ponder over his problem. He had always been careful to shade the windows with newspapers. He did not believe that any one would attempt another shot at him, and yet he took no unnecessary chances. He noticed again the paper that had dropped down from the window beside him. He half stood up to replace it, when a rifle shot crashed outside, and a round, sharp-cut hole appeared like a stroke of magic in the caboose window.

Joe sighed gently. His head sagged, he sank down on the table, his arms flat across its top. A thin pool of blood crept across the map, spread slowly, glistening scarlet in the lantern's light, and obliterated the blue line of ink traced across its surface.

XXII

FIFTEEN feet away from the caboose, behind a pile of lumber, Sneed Cowsie

jerked the lever of his rifle down. Straightening up from his crouching position, he looked through the lighted corner of the little square window in the side of the car, rested his gun on a timber, and sighted again.

"I'll settle it all fur shore," he muttered, lining the half obscured sights together. "Ye know too much now!"

Even as his finger squeezed on the trigger, he dodged down, for a load of buckshot went swishing wickedly over his head. He had slipped an oaken pin through the hasp and staple of the shanty door, to keep the card players from pursuing him. He calculated that it would take them some time to get out, and then he would be far off down the hollow; but he had misjudged the men who were inside.

The special agent was quick-witted At the sound of the rifle shot outside he jumped from his chair, reached for a shotgun that stood against the wall, and, almost in one motion, was at the barred door. He wasted no time trying to open it. Without raising the gun to his shoulder, he fired a charge of buckshot through the place where the lock set. The heavy load of shot splintered a hole as big as a man's head in the light wooden structure of the door. It flew open, and six men, their ready guns before them, tumbled out.

The wind had risen, and the slab pile behind the sawmill flared up in a burst of flame, lighting up the surroundings. It was time for Sneed Cowsie to hurry his flight. Crouching low, he ran at top speed toward the hollow where he had tied his horse. He had almost reached the shelter of the woods when a shout rose:

"There he goes! Halt, or we shoot!"

Ten feet separated him from the safety of the timber, and he leaped for it like a frightened rabbit. A volley of shots answered his action. His gun flew from his hands as a stunning blow struck him on the shoulder. The shock of the impact spun him halfway around. He stumbled and sprawled to his hands and knees, but was up immediately, and dived into a thick clump of bushes.

Things were going wrong for Sneed, for a minute later, when he had wormed his way through the bushes to the tree where his horse had been tied, he found that the animal was gone. Frightened by the volley just fired, it had broken the rotten piece of line and was galloping back toward Yellow Hill. He could hear the sound of its progress a hundred yards down the hollow, as its flying feet splashed through the dried leaves.

Close to him other feet rustled the leaves, and Sneed lost no time in fleeing. His carefully laid plans were not coming out as he had expected. He glanced up at the full moon, and cursed under his breath, for the silvery globe was lighting up the scenery almost as brightly as the sun would. He cursed the figure of a man outlined on the ridge above. Looking up at the other ridge, he saw two men there, and cursed again. He could hear others behind him. He was at a disadvantage. They had him down in the hollow. If he climbed the ridge on either side, he would be a fair target for them. Behind him the rustle of the leaves and the snap of dry twigs told him that the hunters were closing in.

But Sneed was in a familiar country. He knew every ridge and valley for miles around. They thought him armed, he knew, and would not close in till a fair chance offered. With scarce a rustle to betray his progress, he kept a hundred yards ahead of his pursuers. Several times he cringed in terror as

a shot answered the swish of a branch pushed aside while he fled.

A mile away from Slabtown the chase came to a stop at a rhododendron thicket near the mouth of the hollow.

"You might as well surrender!" he heard a voice call. "We've got you surrounded!"

Sneed crouched down under the rhododendron scrub. They had him cornered. He silently swore at the turn of luck that had brought him to this, and cursed the man who had egged him on.

But he still had a card to play. Lying at full length, he cautiously reached out his right arm and swept a pile of leaves together. In the shelter of his outspread coat he struck a match. All unmindful of the possible consequences, careless of the half hundred people, his own relatives, down the wind at Slabtown, without a thought of Mary Lee, Sneed touched the match to the pile. Snakelike, on his belly, he wormed his way under the laced branches of the thicket toward the ridge.

He heard the shouts and cries of his pursuers. He grinned, a devilish expression in his eyes, his yellow teeth bared.

"Yell, damn ye, yell!" he snarled. "I've got the best o' ye now!"

The dry underbrush flared up and spread the blaze. Sneed slunk up to the ridge and looked back from behind a stump. His pursuers had run away from the fire up the wind, naturally thinking that he had fled in that direction. In the glare from the speeding flames he saw them dashing back and forth.

"Ye think ye're clever," he gritted. "But I did ye then!"

Stooped over, his arms dangling, his knees bent, Sneed loped easily downhill away from the conflagration. He had decided that he would make his way in front of the advancing flames, hidden by the dense smoke, to Grassy Branch. There he knew a place just below the railroad trestle where a cave in the overhanging rocks would shelter him till the fire passed.

Till it passed! He stopped and looked back, and a shadow of fear stole wrinkling over his face. The fire he had started was now a roaring conflagration advancing swiftly toward him.

Down a slope Sneed hurried, then topped a rise and looked back again. Above the noise of the fire he heard a locomotive whistle, *toot, toot, toot*—nervous, abrupt staccato. The sound came from toward Slabtown. He could see the livid red front of the fire not far from the settlement.

Sneed lost all caution now. The roar of the racing flames drew nearer every second. He ran as only a man frantic with fear runs, stumbling over fallen logs, scrambling through brier patches, raked by thorns, his hands and face whipped by branches. Overhead chunks of glowing fire shot up, soared high in the air, fell and started fresh fires. The smoke was so dense that he could scarcely see ahead. A great fear clutched him. Terror-driven, he crashed on, his pursuers forgotten, the stinging pain in his shoulder unnoticed.

Once he glanced to the left as he ran. The fire had reached Slabtown. He saw the mills ablaze, and caught a glimpse of the roof of a building as its boards sailed flaming through the air. The wind had increased to half a gale. He feared he never could reach the cave that he was making for. Already the fire was ahead of him. Several times he bore sharply to left or right, to dodge a patch of burning woods in front.

Presently, however, Sneed let out a

yell of relief. Ahead of him glistened the shining tread of steel rails, just a short way ahead lay safety. As he leaped out of the woods, he saw a string of cars backing down toward him. His frantic hands stretched ahead.

He Jumped, Grabbed at a Passing Box Car, Slipped and Fell Under the Train

Another leap and he was on the right of way. He jumped, grabbed at a passing box car, slipped, and fell under the train. He writhed once, uttered an ear piercing scream, and then lay very still between the rails. The cars ran on.

XXIII

A HEAVY, chattering roar, the sound of a locomotive popping off, dimly penetrated Joe Allen's returning consciousness. What had he been doing that he had neglected to bank the 81's fires? The steam pressure had crawled up. She would blow off her water, burn dry, and scorch her crown sheet. Her flues would leak. Some one ought to attend to her at once!

Joe raised his head. It thumped painfully with each heartbeat. What was the matter? Vague questions shot through his befuddled mind.

Then he opened his eyes and saw the puddle of blood, glistening red, obscuring the map before him. Slowly he raised his hand and felt the ridged

score across his temple. His fingers came away wet and sticky. Then he saw the hole in the window beside him. He tried to rise, but his knees buckled. Holding on to the edge of the table, he hauled himself up and made his way painfully to the water cooler in the corner of the caboose. He drank glass after glass, and the cold draft revived him.

His throbbing head cleared a little, and realization gradually came over him. Sneed had taken a shot at him and had grazed his forehead. The would-be murderer must have had some strong motive for that, else he never would have taken a chance with those deputy sheriffs so close at hand. But where were they?

Joe opened the door and looked out. A gust of hot smoke, sharp with the tang of burning pine, met his nostrils. His eyes widened in surprise. Not a quarter of a mile away an advancing wall of flame was leaping high in the air. The woods were on fire. He could hear the crash of falling trees and the growing roar of the flames. He had no time to lose if he was to get away from the destroying monster that was sweeping on toward Slabtown.

Climbing down, he staggered alongside the cars to where the 81, with a white plume of steam shooting out from her safety valve, gleamed rosy red in the reflected light of the fire. His mind still befuddled, Joe coughed when he inhaled the smoke-filled air. He climbed painfully up through the gangway, sank down on the engineer's seat box, and reached for the injector, his first thought being to fill the boiler. He could see the bobbing level of the water just an inch up in the glass, so bright was the reflection from the light outside.

Looking over the tank to where the string of empty cars stood, he remembered that they had not been turned. The 81 still stood the way she had come in. Little that mattered, however, for he could push the box cars in front of him. The engine would run backward as well as ahead. Just as his hand reached for the throttle, he heard a woman call. Her words rose in a loud-pitched scream:

"Wait, Joey, wait! Take we-uns with ye!"

He recognized Mary Lee's voice.

His shoulders sagged forward, and he saw a few slow drops of blood fall on the bib of his overalls. With a great effort he raised his head again, and closed his hand over the throttle. His left hand tightened on the throttle grip, and the latch lifted. His one unreasoning instinct was to run away from the fire; but even as his arm tensed to open the throttle, he wearily pushed it closed.

"They're all a comin', Joey," he heard Mary Lee call. "They know ye'll take them with ye!"

Of course he would take Mary Lee with him when he went; but the others—he cared little for them. They were Cowsies, and the Cowsies had done this to him. If he waited for them, it might be too late. If the fire reached the right of way ahead, it might burn the cross ties and buckle the rails. It might even destroy the trestle over Grassy Branch, and then escape would be wholly cut off.

He reached into his pocket for his handkerchief. A sheet of paper flipped out—the receipt for his dues to the B. of L. F. and E. The light from outside was so strong now that Joe, sitting on the seat box with his head hanging down, could read the printed letters on the receipt as if it were broad daylight. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers—he was one of them now. He

had left the code of the mountains behind him when he climbed into a locomotive's cab. He had assumed obligations far beyond the mere satisfying of personal grudges. His first duty was to the road and to the people whom it served.

He swung his right hand up, and his numb fingers closed over the whistle cord. *Boot, boot, boot, boot, boot,* he signaled, quick and sharp. *Whaaaho! Boot, boot, boot, boot, boot,* the whistle raised its imperative call.

A few seconds later he saw people frantically dashing toward his train. Men with their arms piled high with belongings, women carrying crying children, half clothed, routed out of bed, they deserted the flimsy shacks that were their homes and rushed toward the spot where the hooting whistle promised escape. At the door of each box car, a couple of men stood helping the women and children in; nor did they waste time in the manner in which they put them aboard. A heave and a pitch, and in they went, the children crying in fright, the women wailing loud. Now and then a sharp scream told of some frightened mortal giving vent to his terror.

A man came running back to the engine.

"They air all yere!" he yelled. "Let's go! We-uns got them all in the cyars"

He started to climb up into the cab. Joe recognized him as Pink Cowsie, the mill boss. A flare of anger spurted through the young engineer's throbbing head.

"Get Back With the Rest of Them! You Have No Right On This Engine!"

"Get down, damn you!" he shrieked

"Get back with the rest of them! You have no right on this engine!"

He slung the reverse lever into back-up motion, opened the throttle, reached for the whistle cord, and sounded *waahoo!* The 81 started and gathered speed. Inside of a quarter of a mile she was backing up fast, shoving her load ahead of her.

Slabtown was behind. Once Joe glanced along the running board up the track toward the mill. The fire had reached it. Even as he looked, he saw boards off the roof go flaming through the air.

Looking in the direction in which he was going he knew that it would be a close race. The flames were following the ridge above Grassy Branch. Here, on the height, the wind had a free sweep, and the fire was traveling rapidly along the crest. Joe hoped to reach the first bridge over the creek in advance of the fire; but if he did, it would surely be with little time to spare.

He widened out on the throttle and notched his Johnson bar farther up the quadrant. Glancing at his steam, he saw that it had dropped. He had forgotten to shut off the injector, and the boiler was almost full. He slammed the handle closed.

The cab was filled with smoke now, so that breathing was difficult. Leaning out of the window, he looked down the track. He could see sheets of flame shooting across the right of way, a gantlet for him to run. Those people in the box cars had some protection; he had little or none. It was no use to close the windows, for the whole back of the cab was open. He would have to take what came.

Through a rift in the clouds of smoke that drove across the right of way he saw a man emerge from the woods, saw him make a run for the train, stumble and fall. The rolling smoke obscured the spot where he sprawled across the rails, A few seconds later, however, the 81 jarred slightly, as if her drivers had bumped over some obstruction—a slight bump and that was all.

Through Joe's mind there flashed a picture. Dumbly he tried to define it, dumbly he recognized what it was. The man half seen through a rift in the smoke, just that fleeting glimpse of him before he passed from sight, was enough. The fellow who had made a break through the fire toward Joe's train was none other than Sneed Cowsie.

Joe had no time to ponder over small happenings just then, for he had caught a fleeting sight of the bridge that crossed the creek. It was afire, enveloped and hidden in a dense cloud of smoke. He had no means of telling how badly the structure was burned, except by going to see. He shut off steam, reversed, and brought the 81 to a stop on the crest of the rise above the creek.

Groping his way down, he felt along the sides of the cars, the muffled cries and shouts of the pent up people inside sounding faint and far-away above the roar of the flames just beyond them. He counted each car as he passed, and saw the ends of the cross-ties smoldering red through the gaps between them. When he came to the last car, he was close to the blazing trestle. The wind winnowed the smoke up; he could see the wooden supports burning fiercely and the flames spurting up between the ties. The snapping and crackling of pitch pine timbers could be heard above the dull roar of the forest fire.

For a second Joe was strongly tempted to take this last chance to save himself. He might make his way

across to the other side. The creek was an obstruction that the flames had not yet jumped. Safety—a doubtful one, but at least a chance—lay over there. There was no safety for him on this side of Grassy Branch. He knew that the box cars might get across

Down the grade she drove. Joe kicked the load hard, and it gathered momentum rapidly. Then he shut off, and a gap widened between engine and cars. He saw them swaying from side to side, saw their scorched and blackened sides as they jerked and rumbled

He Leaped Past an Opening Between the Cars and a Solid Sheet of Flame Swept Through

and he knew for a certainty that the heavy locomotive never could. Her weight would crash through the weakened structure.

But Joe had started to send the inhabitants of Slabtown to safety, and he could not stop with less. He never knew how he got back to the 81, halting several times to slap out burning places on his clothes where they had caught as he leaped past an opening between cars and a solid sheet of flame swept through. He barely made it, jerked the cut lever on the car nearest the tank, got back in the cab and opened the throttle. The cab windows, blue green from the heat, splintered and fell out of their smoking frames. The paint was blistered off the 81's sides, her steel plates were scorching hot to touch.

across the bridge, saw them slide up the slight grade on the other side, top the rise, and rapidly disappear from view, the corner of the roof of the last car blazing merrily. He knew that their momentum would carry them a long way down the grade beyond, perhaps even to Glen Cove.

He wished he had thought of starting the air pumps on the 81, for he might have had the air pressure pumped up by now. Putting his feet against the rear of the cab, he tried to pull the reverse lever ahead, to stop the locomotive; but he couldn't make it. Again he tugged. He was pulling on the lever when the 81 sagged in a sickening lurch. Her tank canted sidewise and with a reverberating clang jumped the steel, bounced a few times on the

cross ties, and leaped far toward the swift running water of Grassy Branch, twenty feet below.

The engine followed, turning on her side as she fell. Her drivers spun through the air. The shuddering chatter of her exhaust, submerged, gurgled for a while after she struck the creek and became quiet. The spinning drivers turned more and more slowly and then stopped. There was a hissing, splashing roar when the water ran in on the hot fire box. A big cloud of steam arose, dwindled, and was obscured by the smoke that swept in ever increasing volume down the creek.

On the bank above, the fire sucked and winnowed among the trees. Patches of oil floated downstream, broke, and spread in shimmering, iridescent colors, reflecting the red glow from the bank above. The moon was covered by a thickening cloud bank, and a few pattering drops of rain fell. The wind died down, and then the rain came in solid sheets.

XXIV

EARLY the next morning June Eagle heard some one coming up the front steps. She ran to the door, thinking it was her father in from his run. When she flung the door open, she was surprised to see Upson standing on the porch. His roadster was in front of the house, the motor running. She could see the sun dancing on the trembling windshield, see a little wisp of smoke curling out of the exhaust.

"June!" Upson's voice was tremulous, his hand shook nervously. "I'm going away." He did not look her in the face as he hurriedly continued: "I got my vacation, and thought I'd take a trip. Come with me!" he blurted out.

Her eyes widened, and she stepped back a pace.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Let's run off, June! Let's run off and be married! I've got plenty of money. We'll stop at the best hotels, we'll take in the shows, we'll have a good time, we'll—"

He stopped. June was looking at him queerly. A red spot burned on each of her cheeks.

"Don't you think, Mr. Upson, you are forcing matters a bit? Why, I wouldn't consider such a thing for a moment. Do you think I'd run off without saying a word to my father? Run off with you, and dad not have the faintest idea where I was?"

Upson's eyes were glittering, and his breath came in short, rapid puffs. He stepped closer to her. She wondered if he had been drinking; and when she caught the smell of whisky on his breath, she knew. He had told her once that he never drank!

She saw a fireman who lived across the street coming up the hill, with his lantern hooked over his arm and his dinner pail swinging in his hand. She breathed a sigh of relief, waved her hand to him, and called:

"Good morning!"

Upson stepped to the edge of the porch, clenching and unclenching his hands nervously. The fireman came up to the gate and stopped.

"Miss June, did you hear the news?" he inquired.

She shook her head.

"No," she replied.

"They had a hectic time out to Slabtown last night. Some fellow took a shot at Nervy Joe Allen, so one of the special agents was just telling me as he rode in with us from Glen Cove. The woods caught afire soon afterward. Slabtown was burned and the branch is completely wiped out back to the first trestle. Nervy stuck there till

he got everybody on board. Then he shoved them down and kicked them across the trestle. They rolled into Glen Cove. I saw the cars standing in the siding this morning when we stopped, and, believe me, they'd been through a fire all right! They didn't lack anything of being scorched. Every one was saved but Nervy." The fireman shook his head. "The engine turned over with him on the trestle, and I expect Nervy's got his."

June's face blanched, and the color vanished from her cheeks.

"Oh, was he hurt?" she managed to gasp.

"I'll say he was," the fireman replied. "He got all banged up. He was burned and almost drowned when they found him wedged between some rocks a half mile down Grassy Branch, a couple of hours after the derrick got there. Well, so long!"

The fireman waved his hand and walked away from the gate.

June turned to Upson. Her tone was scornful, and there was an expression of disdain on her face.

"You knew all this when you came up here," she said. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Upson averted his face for a moment, and then replied sneeringly:

"I thought you said you were through with that hillbilly."

June's eyes flashed, and she drew herself up.

"You may call him a hillbilly, but I admire him for his courage. You have done your best to poison my mind against him, but I want to tell you that you have not succeeded in the least, Mr. Upson. I will say good-by to you."

She turned and went into the house, closing the door behind her.

Upson did not hesitate. Almost running, he went down the path through the gate, jumped into his car, and shot down the hill with a crackling roar. Looking out of the window, June watched him swing around the curve and into the road that led from town. He slewed a bit as his car struck the wet concrete, straightened out, and rapidly vanished from her sight. She never saw him again.

Stepping to the telephone, she called the hospital and inquired how Joe Allen was. The reply was not very assuring.

"He's resting. The doctors are deciding now whether an operation will be necessary."

To June's next inquiry the answer was:

"Oh, no; no one is allowed to see him. It would do no good, anyway, for he hasn't yet recovered consciousness."

June sat down beside the telephone. When Jack Eagle came in, fifteen minutes later, he found her crying

Down, down into a deep abyss, down into the darkness, Joe Allen sank. The Johnson bar, it wouldn't move, the Johnson bar, it wouldn't move—that thought persisted. With a supreme effort he bent his back and surged with all his strength.

He felt an arm under his head and heard a woman's voice.

"Here, drink this," it told him.

He drank and lay back again. As he fell asleep, he heard one of the men's voices say:

"I don't think an operation is necessary."

The other two doctors nodded in assent, and the three went softly from the room.

When Joe awoke, it was evening. At his stir, the nurse came over beside him.

"How do you feel?" she inquired, as she caught his wrist with practised hand, and, looking at her watch, counted his pulse beats.

"I can't just tell how I feel yet," he replied in a low voice. "Seems like I just started feeling again." He saw a faint smile cross her face when he added: "'Cept for a steady throb across my head, a pain in my side at every breath, and sharp stabs at my shoulder when I move, I'm perfectly all right. What happened to me, anyway?"

"You'll find out in good time," the nurse answered. "You mustn't ask questions now. Quiet and rest are what you're most in need of, and before long you'll hear all the details."

But it was two weeks before Joe Allen learned any of the things that he wanted to know.

"You've got more friends than you have any idea of," was all that the nurse would say, in reply to his questions.

"Friends?" Joe repeated. "Funny none come to see me!"

"Little you know the trouble we've had keeping them out. Friends!" she repeated, with a laugh. "You're well supplied, Joe. You have one—"

She checked herself as the doctor came into the room in time to hear the last of the conversation.

"Joe," he said. "You'd better not be too anxious for company. You've barely missed passing on. Really you're quite an interesting case. You had a slightly fractured skull, three ribs broken, and a shoulder dislocated. You were suffering from submergence, severe burns, and internal injuries, any one of which ought by all the rules to have been fatal; and yet you are recovering rapidly. By George, young fellow, your vitality is amazing!"

Again Joe asked the same question he had repeated so often in the past week:

"Doctor, when are you going to let me see folks?"

The doctor laughed.

"Present company getting tiresome, Joe?"

"No, doctor," Joe answered. "No, it's not that. You've all been very good to me, and I know I've often been hard to get along with. I'll never forget your patience, and—and—but there's some one else I was hoping to see."

The nurse nodded.

"I know!" she said. "There's a handsome, well dressed, blue-eyed, fair-haired girl who has been bringing a bouquet of flowers each day. I suppose you'll know who she is from that description."

A contented smile settled on Joe's face.

The nurse looked inquiringly at the doctor as she stood in the doorway. He hesitated, stroked his chin, walked over to the sheet on the table, and studied it. Presently he laid the chart down and nodded.

"All right!" he said. "Let her come up for a few minutes if she calls to-day."

He and the nurse left the room. When the latter returned, Joe asked eagerly:

"Did you call her? Did you call June Eagle on the telephone?"

"It's all right, Joe," the nurse answered. "She left her phone number with me a week ago. I gave her a ring; she'll be up after a while."

Joe lived ages in the next half hour—but when she arrived he was rewarded for his wait.

"Oh, Joe, I'm so glad you're getting well again!" she said.

He caught his breath, muttered

something, and held out his left hand to her. She stood above him, looking down at his pale face and bandaged head. All the depth and wealth of compassion, the warm sympathy, the age-old instincts of the mothers of the race of men, showed in June Eagle's bearing and expression. She leaned over and kissed him.

"You poor, poor boy!" she murmured.

She drew a chair over and sat down beside him. A few minutes later the nurse started into the room; but at the sight of the two she stopped, turned and went silently out, smiling to herself.

Passing along the hall, she met the doctor.

"How's the young engineer now?" he asked.

"Oh, he's doing famously," she replied, smiling. "I think he's just got a go-ahead signal!"

XXV

A FEW moments later Jack Eagle came into the room.

"Heyho, old dusty!" he greeted Joe genially. "I dropped in to see Snooks Leonard on my way up. He was on the 146 when it struck a rock a couple of months ago." Jack laughed. "I think Snooks could have been out a long time ago, but they say he's got his eye on one of the nurses, and is trying to outtalk her. So you're coming on, eh, Nervy?" Jack shook his head. "By George," he continued, "it certainly seems like a miracle to see you alive and kicking! No one expected you ever to come out of it, especially after you lay half the night in Grassy Branch. Suppose you've heard all about that, though. That's done and past. There's something else I want to tell you. It's coming, and coming fast."

As her father started talking, June went over beside the window.

"You two remind me of the joke about the railroad man who was being ferried across the Styx," she said. "They say he glanced around him and remarked to Charon, pointing to the crowd waiting on the bank to get across:

"'Say, old man, why don't you get a bridge put across this creek, and run a snappy little train on a half hour schedule? We could handle them nicely, and I'm bidding in the job of hog-head.'

"Well or sick, alive or dead," concluded June, "it does seem that if a man's a railroader once, he's a railroader for good and all."

"But, June," explained Jack, "you understand how important this is to Joe, and how it'll do more to cheer him up than anything else we could tell him."

"All right, dad," the girl agreed. "Tell him, if you must."

"First," began Jack, "they're putting up a thirty-stall roundhouse at Glen Cove. Yep," he nodded in reply to Joe's incredulous stare. "They're hitting the ball hard out there. They're losing no time. It's a division terminal for the new Chestnut Gap division. They're rebuilding the part destroyed by the fire right on through Slabtown, through Chestnut Gap, to join on to the main line away down at Long Plains. A hundred and forty-six miles it runs from Glen Cove to Long Plains—a new division, Joe! When that stretch is complete—concrete bridges, rock ballast, hundred-pound steel rails, block signals—it will be a sweet piece of road, with long easy curves and not a grade over half of one per cent. By George, it's a pretty piece of work, and the company is sure pushing it. It'll

be ready for traffic in a few months. You know, Joe, they've had this in mind for some time, and kept it a secret till they bought up the right of way clear through. It was surveyed a long while ago, and few people realized then what the engineering crew was up to. They're working the construction in sections, just five miles to a section, and they've made a time-limit job of it with outside contractors."

Jack's eyes glistened.

"We'll give the Interstate one hot run for the mail contract that they thought they had in their pocket! By the way, Joe, that's a chance for you. You'll probably be out of here and marked up for work in time to take a run."

"Yes, Jack, I'd thought of that," agreed Joe. There was a note of eagerness in his voice, although he tried to speak casually. "Are you by any chance marking up on the new division, Jack?"

Jack Eagle shook his head.

"No, Joe, I'm satisfied. If they run the Blue Streak over the Chestnut Gap, it will be gravy for me. You see, I'll drive her out to Glen Cove east-bound and take her in west-bound. I'll have only a few hours' run each day, and every night at home."

At this news Joe's anxious expression vanished.

"I'm glad of that, Jack, because—"

The nurse entered the room as Joe spoke. She noticed the eager gleam in his eyes and the excited flush on his face, and saw his hand on the cover trembling nervously.

"Joe," she said abruptly, "you know you're not to get excited." She turned to Jack Eagle. "I think you've been here long enough. He had better have quiet and rest now."

Jack bowed and picked up his hat.

"I'll take the hint—this way out," he laughed. "See you again, Joe!"

June walked over to the bedside.

"Joe," she said in a low voice, "I'll be thinking of you and hoping that everything will come out right."

She laid her hand in his for a minute, turned, and was gone.

After they left, the nurse shook a warning finger at Joe.

"No more visitors!" she threatened. "You take a nap, and be quiet for the rest of the day."

She went out and closed the door behind her; but an hour or so later Joe was awakened by the sound of an altercation in the hallway. He recognized his father's voice.

"Ye done tol' me last time I was in yere I could see him if I come agin; and I aim to see my Joey right now!"

"But he's resting—he's asleep," a woman's voice replied.

"I'll jest take me a cheer and wait till he wakes up," the determined answer came. "I bin up yere six or seven times runnin', and I aim to stay yere till I kin have a little talk with my boy this time."

A moment later, Calvin Allen came into the room. He looked at Joe, who lay on the bed with wide open eyes. Then he jerked his thumb over his shoulder.

"A bunch o' them thar funny-dressed womenfolk that air a workin' yere tried to bar me out, Joey," he said, "but I done jousted them out o' my way and trotted right in." He drew up a chair and sat down. "How air ye, anyways, son?"

Joe was almost too much stunned for speech at his father's appearance. Calvin had on a new store suit of blue serge, new store shoes, a white shirt and a collar. His face was clean-shaven, his hair neatly cut. He leaned back in

the chair, crossed his legs, and spoke with an air of vast complacency.

"Joey," he said, "git ye out of this yere place and come home with me. I tol' ye as how hit war a risky piece o' work ye were at. We-uns 'll do a little huntin', go a fishin', and sort o' frog about together. I bin a thinkin' o' gittin' me one of these yere cyars. I hain't much on runnin' 'em, but I reckon ye'd be able to manage hit tolable, an' we-uns could gom about in hit, ye and me!"

"But, pap," Joe gasped, "how come all this?"

Calvin smiled serenely.

"Oh, I bin doin' a little speculatin', Joey. Ye see, the railroad war arter me fur to git that thar meadow land o' mine acrost the tracks. We-uns scorsed about fer some time 'fore I give in to them." He rocked his chair back and forth. "I finally let 'em have hit at a hundred dollars a acre, and Joey, as ye know, thar war eighty acres, more or less, in that parcel o' land that lay beyont the railroad. They air a puttin' up a brick roundhouse and layin' a lot of tracks thar. They say hit's a yard, so one of them thar surveyor fellers war a tellin' me."

Calvin was enjoying the rôle of the bearer of important news.

"Talkin' o' them thar surveyor fellers," he went on. "One o' them done married Mary Lee Cowsie. She bin a rantin' around fer some time, huntin' a man."

Joe wondered at the casual way in which his father mentioned the Cowsies. Calvin's next words explained the reason.

"I hain't got nuthin' agin 'em now, Joey. Ye squared things off with 'em."

"How's that?" the son asked, mystified.

"Oh, arter the fire, Sneed war found atween the rails nigh the trestle ye went over. Ye'd driv yore train over him first, and ye made a good job of hit, Joey. Ye evened things up fer him takin' that shot at ye, and at me, too. O' course, hit's easy to see now what he was a workin' fer. He knowed through his cousin that the railroad war goin' to build around Glen Cove. This yere Upson war figgerin' on pickin' up our place fer next to nothin' and sellin' hit back agin to the railroad fer a fancy price. I jest heared in town to-day that Upson war gone."

The head nurse entered the room and interrupted the conversation.

"Mr. Allen, you may be doing your boy a grave injury by getting him all worked up. Don't you think you'd better let him rest, and come back to see him later?"

Calvin nodded.

"I reckon as how I done told him most o' the things I had on my mind." He picked up his hat. "I'll be seein' ye right along, Joey," he promised, as he left.

XXVI

As the days passed, Joe had many visitors. All the engineers for whom he had fired came up to see him during their time off, and the firemen and conductors whom he knew would drop in to spend fifteen minutes or half an hour with him before going around to see other railroad men in the hospital.

The old menace that had hung over him before his accident was gone now. The superintendent, who had been up several times, had confidentially informed him how things had finally come to an abrupt climax.

The special agents at Slabtown had been there for a double purpose. Their suspicions all pointed to the fact that some one in that vicinity was implicated in the box car robberies. The

first night out, Belnap had seen a dozen of the sawmill hands wearing new shoes, and a little quiet investigation had proved that shoes of that particular make had been stolen from a car in the yards just previously. A deputy had followed Sneed Cowsie to town, and had seen Upson and him together. It was already clear that the robbers, whoever they might be, were directed by some one who had access to the records, and who knew which car would be worth the risk of opening and where it could be found in a convenient place.

"When you told us about No. 93," the superintendent told Joe, "and what you fancied you saw there, we knew to a certainty who that man was. That night, in the whole train, No. 93 carried only one car whose contents were of sufficient value to be tempting, and that car was switched on to the train an hour before she pulled out. No one here knew what it was loaded with except myself and one other man—Upson. I happened to be there when it was switched on. In fact, the yard master at that end and myself decided to route it over our division, as it contained rush stuff, instead of sending it a longer way around on the main line I carried her way bill back with me on the passenger that preceded No. 93 by an hour. Next morning you were shot at. This was all circumstantial evidence, of course, but the circumstances that pointed to Upson were almost convincing. He was far shrewder than we gave him credit for, though. When you overturned and were hurt, he knew that his hand would soon be exposed, and he decamped. He didn't leave the slightest trace, although Belnap recovered a lot of goods that were cached out at Yellow Hill, in a barn where this Cowsie fellow kept his car. The morning he left, a couple of boomer hump riders left, too. Well, the division is lucky to be rid of them. We haven't had a loss since.

Joe sat thinking. He glanced at his watch. It was one o'clock. June would not arrive here for another hour. He cocked his head and listened, as a step sounded in the hallway. An impatient look settled on his face. It was the doctor who opened the door and came in breezily.

"Good morning, Allen! How's the Slabtown special running?"

Joe shook his head.

"Doc, the monkey's got it to-day. The coal's all used up, the water's down to the lower gauge, and the nearest tank is twenty miles away. We're sitting right in the middle of the main line. We can't back up, and we can't go ahead. All we can do is to hope somebody'll come along and give us a push and get us to moving again."

As the doctor studied the report sheet that the nurse had filled out, Joe watched him with a half smile.

The doctor grinned.

"You're pretty nearly well, all right. I'd better get you out of here before you expose us. You railroad fellows are funny. The average man who comes up here has quite a bit of respect for his doctor, but an engineer rates a physician about like he would a conductor, and a conductor has the same attitude toward his doctor as he has to a ticket collector—a necessary evil, to be tolerated, but watched closely." Suddenly he asked: "How would you like to go home, Joey."

"You mean it, doc? Or are you giving me another of those sugar-coated pills that lose their coating, stick halfway down, and kick in all directions?"

His face brightened, his whole manner changed, when the doctor replied:

"No, this is genuine, Allen. You've been pretty patient. You can make your get-away to-day."

"I'm certainly glad! I've got something to do to-day, something important, and—"

The doctor interrupted him.

"Now wait! You'll have to take things easy for a while, Allen. You had better report back here at least once a week; but if you'll avoid exertion and excitement, I think you'll soon be normal. And now I guess you can go home."

Hardly had the doctor left the room when Joe rang for the nurse.

"Please rustle up my clothes," he asked her. "I'm beating it to-day."

Fifteen minutes later Joe Allen passed out of the front door of the building that had been his home for three months. He felt like a man just released from prison. Drawing a deep breath, he squared his shoulders and walked down to the corner, toward the stopping place for the street car, with never a backward glance at the hospital. He had put it behind him.

Nevertheless, as he rode down toward the station, scenes and incidents of the past months kept recurring to him. He thought of the men who had proved their friendship for him — of Jack Eagle, who had come up so often and kept him informed as to the happenings around the railroad; of others who had brought him magazines and books. He grinned at the remembrance of the time when old Ed, the derrick cook, had brought in a whole fried spring chicken, and had suggested bringing up a baked ham.

"I jest done got my supplies in to-day," Ed had told him. "I done find me a nice fat little ham, ain't much over ten pounds, what makes yo' mouth water to look at. Ain't no use feedin' them derrick trash with things like dat, what sick folkses should have!"

Joe chuckled, remembering how Ed was disappointed at his refusal of this tidbit. Then his smile faded, his expression became thoughtful. The nurses and doctors—he wished he could do something to repay them for their many acts of kindness.

Glancing out of the window, he saw that the next stop was his. When the car halted, he got off slowly, and, not without effort, climbed the hill toward the house that stood near its crest. June saw him approaching, and came down the path to meet him.

"Well, Joe, I was just getting ready to come up and see you, and here you come to see me! So you finally won free?"

He answered her soberly.

"Yes, I'm free, June — free once more to take my place among the living, and—"

She knew what was coming. The tone of his voice, the expression on his face, his whole bearing, told her more plainly than words what he was going to say. She put her hand on his arm.

"Come inside," she said laughingly, yet with a little catch of nervousness in her voice.

Nor was she mistaken. Once inside, Joe pulled out the velvet-lined box that held the ring.

"June, I gave you this once, and you returned it." The ring glistened in the palm of his outstretched hand. "I am offering it to you again."

They stood a few feet apart, he with hand outstretched, June surveying him studiously. Joe Allen had passed through the fire of suffering and had emerged annealed and tempered by the flames of pain. With a swift pang, June noticed how thin and pale he was. The deep tan was gone from his face;

his eyes had a tenderness in them that she had never seen before.

"I'm offering it to you again, June," he repeated; "and there's a difference this time. I've a greater appreciation of you now than I ever had before. Things that once loomed big now seem inconsequential and of little value. Your love, which I once subordinated to other things, is now the best and biggest thing in my life." He took her hand in his. "Oh, June," he whispered. "all the dreams of my ambition seem to be as nothing to my love for you!"

He needed no words from her. The limpid, liquid light in her eyes, the tremulous palpitation of her throat, the flood of happiness that swept the color into her cheeks, gave Joe Allen his answer. He took a halting step toward her, his arms were around her, and he promised:

"Bud, I'll let nothing come between us again!"

They sat on the wide window ledge, looking out down the hill toward the railroad, all athrill with the happiness of this golden moment. A locomotive whistle drifted up to them, wind-borne. Joe smiled.

"That's the first time I've heard the old 742's steamboat whistle in months. I wonder if Crab McAllister is on his run again! It doesn't sound like the way Crab tickles the whistle cord," he added abstractedly. "Which reminds me, June—I've got to get down to the special meeting this afternoon, although I'd a thousand times rather be here with you."

As he walked down the path, his face was transfigured by a calm contentment. He turned at the gate, waved his hand to the girl on the porch, and pulled out his watch.

"Three fifteen," he said to himself. "I've got to hurry. I'm fifteen minutes late now."

When he arrived at Trainmen's Hall, the special meeting of the B. of L. F. and E. was already in session. The fireman who stood at the outer door grinned when he saw Joe.

"Another one coming! How did you break loose? Gee, I'll bet some of these hogheads and tallow pots dead and buried for a year are squirming in their graves, trying to get out and get up here this afternoon. I bet some tombstones are wiggling right now. You bidding in a job on the new division, too? Step inside, brother, and stick your fist in the grab bag!"

Joe merely grinned.

"Must be a crowd here," he remarked.

"Crowd!" the other ejaculated. "There's every guy in there that kin get in. There's delegates here to-day that I never heard tell of before, all claiming their rights. Some of them come from so far back in the sticks they haven't had a haircut in two months. It's a going to be a grand raffle, with the Blue Streak as the main prize and fifty other runs on the Chestnut Gap as consolation rewards for the lucky guys." The fireman laughed. "I'd be in there yelping for a good run myself, only I figure that when all those fellows mark off this division, it'll be as vacant as a nigger graveyard at midnight, and I'll grab me a soft job right here. Go on in and howl, Nervy! You got as good a chance as the next guy."

Joe opened the door. He saw Jack Eagle up on the raised platform, and recalled that Jack was chairman of the brotherhood. The hall was packed. This was indeed a special and extraordinary meeting of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers. Crab McAllister had the floor.

"Yeh!" Crab was saying, a belligerent note in his voice. "Yeh, I run for thirty days on the Slabtown two different times. I got rights there that ought to be recognized above some of these delegates that are howling so loud. Sixty days!" Crab repeated. "That gives me more rights than any guy that's never been over the run. I liked that run. It was a sweet job. Nice and quiet out at Slabtown of a night. A fellow could sleep great, I tell you, out there!"

Someone snickered. A laugh rose and swelled into a shouting chorus at Crab's last remark. While the noise was at its height, Joe walked slowly up the aisle. A hush descended on the room.

"There's Nervy," he heard some one say. "He's out. Three cheers for Nervy!"

When the racket quieted, he spoke with an effort.

"Thanks, gentlemen," he said. "With the permission of the chair, I'd like to speak a few words."

"Go ahead, Nervy!"

"All right—out with it!"

Jack rapped for order several times before he again quieted the room.

"I've only a few words to say," Joe began. "I merely want to be put on record as bidding in the Blue Streak on the Chestnut Gap division. I want to inform you that I am No. 1 engineer on that division. It is a continuation of the old Slabtown branch. I hold the rights by seniority on the Slabtown, and I am now demanding these rights on the Chestnut Gap division."

A dead silence fell. Joe looked at Jack Eagle. The chairman nodded.

"You win," was all he said.

Joe turned and walked down the aisle and out of the door. As he passed the fireman at the door remarked:

"Good fer you, Nervy! You sure put one over them. When are you going out on the Blue Streak?"

Joe smiled.

"The first run she makes through the Chestnut Gap," he replied, "unless something occurs to prevent it."

XXVII

THE speeches at the official opening of the Chestnut Gap division, at Glen Cove, were done. The first train would soon take the rails. The crowd gathered along the tracks, watching expectantly down the right of way. The banjo target of the signal bridge above changed its color from yellow to red. Faintly a whistle call trembled on the air. A murmur arose from the assemblage and welled into a roar.

"The Blue Streak, she's coming!" some one shouted.

Round a bend half a mile away a big engine drove into sight. The morning sunlight glinted from the brass trim on her front, and from her nickeled cylinder-head covers. There was a brief sight of her side rods flipping up and down. Then the exhaust from her stack died. A white puff of steam arose. *Whaaaahoo!* Long drawn out, vibrating heavily, the chime whistle raised a station blow.

A minute later the Blue Streak felt the check and drag of the brake shoes. As she took the switch on to the new steel of the curve, she lost her speed. Slower and slower she rolled, until she came to a smooth stop before the new station at the junction. Jack Eagle waved his hand to the group beside the engine, climbed down, pulled off his glove, and laid his hand on the right main pin. He turned to Joe Allen, who had just come forward from the coach behind.

"Joe, they took up the rod brasses

last night. She's binding a little. Watch her for a while. She won't seize on you, but you'd better oil her well. Outside of that the old girl's running like an Elgin to-day."

"All right, Jack," Joe replied. "You got my tools and grip aboard?"

"They're all there," was the answer.

Joe went up into the cab, put on his overalls, knotted his handkerchief around his neck, slipped the leather thong on to his watch, and looped it through a buttonhole on his jumper. Then, taking the long-spouted oil can down from the rack above the fire door, he descended to the ground.

"Joey!" some one called.

Pink Cowsie, the mill boss of Slabtown, approached. Diffidently he held out his hand.

"Joey," he said, "we-uns air shore in yore debt. But fer ye, we'd not be yere to-day. Yere's wishin' ye luck and tellin' ye that we-uns are all hopin' ye well."

Joe grasped the proffered hand and smiled good-naturedly.

"All right, Pink, I'm glad of that. I'd like to be able to say I haven't an enemy in the world!"

Pink wanted to continue the conversation, but Joe had work to do.

"I'll be seeing you again, Pink," he said, standing on the side rod and holding his can high above the valve stem.

He could scarcely repress a grin as he noticed his father leaning against the upright on one side of the signal bridge. Calvin Allen was dressed in his new suit, and the half-smoked butt of a cigar stuck out of the corner of his mouth at an acute upward angle. This was his big day.

When Joe handed the can back to his fireman, he heard his father proudly saying:

"Yep, thet thar engineer is my own boy, Joey Allen. He air a goin' ter run thet thar train a hellin' up over this yere new railroad this mawnin'!"

Joe looked at his watch, to see if he could spare a minute for his father; but time was short, and there was some one to whom he must say a few more words before starting. June watched him come back around the front end of the 1001. She had ridden out on the train with him to see him go out on his first big run.

"Say, Joe Allen, you fancy yourself, don't you?" she said, laughing. "In that new suit of overalls, with a red silk handkerchief knotted so jauntily about your neck, and those white gloves, and that cap cocked so rakishly over one eye, you must think you're a model for what the well-dressed engineer will wear!"

He grinned and surveyed her trim figure with an approving eye.

"Oh, ho, June, remember you have on a new outfit yourself! This must be a special occasion for you, too."

She became serious.

"It is indeed, Joe. The fact that you're a celebrity to-day makes me one, too. I guess I'll be hanging on to your coat tails from now on; and when they cheer Joe Allen, they'll be cheering me, too."

"Now, June—" he began, and stopped.

The conductor came toward them and threw up his hand.

"I've got to go, June."

"Good luck!" she called to him.

A ringing cheer arose as he climbed into the cab, its small confines already well occupied with men. It was lucky, he thought, that there was an automatic stoker on the engine, for a fireman wouldn't have room to work a shovel to-day.

Peep, peep, the air signal whistle

shrilled above his head. He caught the bell rope to start the ringer, and twisted the ringer valve. *Gong, gong,* the warning rang out. He dropped the reverse lever ahead and eased out on the throttle. The 1001's drivers took hold of the rail, and she moved away from the station.

Looking back, Joe saw the crowd waving at him, and heard their shouts and cheers; but of all the hundreds of people there he really saw but one. June Eagle fluttered a dainty little handkerchief. He saw the sunlight glint off a ring on her finger, and as he waved his gloved hand back at her a flood of happiness swept over him.

He turned and looked around him. The new superintendent sat behind him. The new master mechanic of the division perched up on the coal boards. The road foreman of engines and the train master of the Chestnut Gap division occupied the fireman's seat, and the tallow sat precariously on the front edge of his seat box. The 1001 settled into her stride, and was cutting off her exhaust in a steady, monotonous rumble. Without a tremor the big engine pushed the miles behind her.

Ahead, a white concrete bridge showed plainly against the blackened ridge across from it. Here was Grassy Branch, where the fire had stopped.

The colonel's voice came from behind Joe Allen.

"Here's where you nearly got yours, Allen," he said.

The engineer half turned.

"I sure hit hard then, colonel," he replied.

Above the rumbling noise from the bridge beneath, he caught only the last words of the colonel's answer: "A hard hitter!"

In front he could see where a large new brick building was going up on the site where Slabtown had once stood. Above the noise of the working engine, he heard snatches of the officials' talk:

"New acid plant—paper mill—going to be a big thing."

As the 1001 roared past, memories crowded fast through Joe Allen's mind. Slabtown, with its crudity and primitiveness, was gone forever. The march of progress had caught up to it and would pass far beyond it. Slabtown, which he'd seen for the last time in a cloud of swirling smoke and the roar of a forest fire, was no more. Blood and Steam! It was through blood and steam that Joe had won his place on the right-hand side, behind the throttle and brake valve of the crack engine on this fast train.

Ahead, seen along the paths of steel converging to a point, lay Chestnut Gap. Joe Allen came abruptly out of his reverie and notched the throttle back a fraction of an inch. He was engineer on the Blue Streak, and he knew that these men riding in the cab with him on his first trip were watching him. He had no time for vagrant thoughts now; and yet, as he reached up, caught the whistle handle, and blew a crossing signal, a picture came into his mind — a picture of June Eagle standing before the new station at Glen Cove, waving good-by to him.

A contented smile played around the corners of his mouth. Again he reached up and caught the whistle handle.

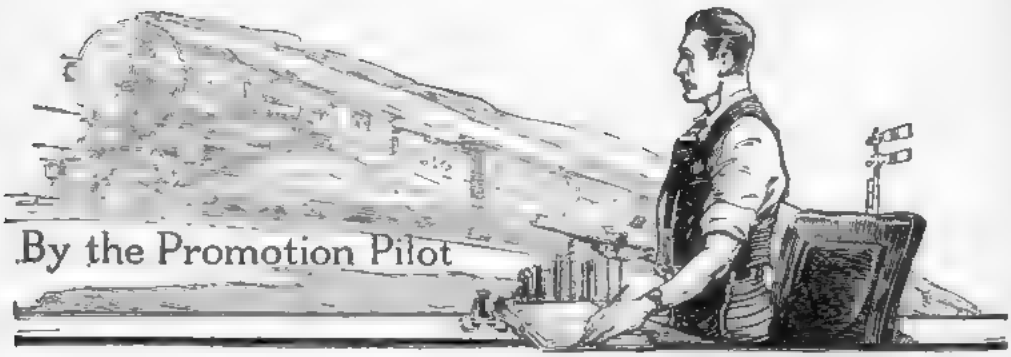
W'aaaho, waaaho, hooo, hooo — he blew a long, tremulous crossing blow though there was no crossing for miles ahead.

He turned and smiled at the men in the cab. Perhaps the colonel understood, for he smiled back and said:

"Give her another one, Joe!"

THE END

Making the Grade



NEVER before has railroading offered such vast opportunities for young men and women in every branch of the service. Believing firmly that we can be helpful in solving many of the problems which confront workers in their battle for promotion, we are devoting this department to helping those men and women who want to help themselves. You are invited to present your problem. No names will be used, and your correspondence will be treated with the strictest confidence. A stamped envelope for reply will bring you advice.

THIS department has no facilities now and will not have facilities for the purpose of placing men in railroad positions During the past month the department has been considerably burdened with requests from men in varied walks of life who desire to make a railroad connection. A great many high school boys between the ages of sixteen and nineteen write in for information as to roads that might be hiring firemen and brakemen.

We would like again to state the purpose of this department is to advise with those men and women who are now firmly established in railroad positions, but who have some problem which concerns the next job ahead of them and which has to do strictly with the business of meriting promotion.

Seeks Traffic Promotion

I WANT to take advantage of your department. I desire to become trained as a passenger representative. I would like to state that I am at present employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad in the capacity of a passenger brakeman with almost twelve years of service. I am twenty-eight years of age and married. The position I aspire to comes under the head of the General Passenger Agent's Department.

Any information that you can furnish will be appreciated

C W C R,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Your strong talking point in seeking to advance from train service to the traffic department is in the fact that as a passenger brakeman you have had the opportunity to prove yourself with the traveling public. In no other branch of railroading except that of train service on passenger runs, does the employee of the railroad come more frequently in contact with a mighty hard to please patronage. You no doubt have noticed that fifty per cent at least of all persons who have any business with the railroad, have a chip on their shoulders and are always ready to hop onto the least little thing and make a mountain of it.

In seeking to advance to the passen-

ger traffic department, your first consideration then is to determine if you have a native sales ability, coupled with extreme fortitude. If, in your own mind, you are convinced that you possess these qualifications, we would suggest that you see your division superintendent. Make an appointment with him and sell yourself to him on your definite qualifications for a passenger traffic position.

You might say to him that you have been considering such a transfer and explain to him the reasons why you feel you will be able to advance much more rapidly than in your present post. All of this is not necessary, of course, but it certainly would be the proper thing and the ethical thing to take your division superintendent, who is your superior officer, and who is in charge of an entirely different branch of railroading, into your confidence. It will flatter him to think that you are doing so, and then your next step would be to see Mr. C. H. Mathews, Jr., who is the general traffic manager for passenger service, located at Philadelphia, Pa. If you go to Mr. Mathews with the approval of your division superintendent it is going to help you immensely.

You then, of course, would explain to Mr. Mathews what your experience has been with the public and what your ambitions and aims are.

It is possible that you might have to take a little less money to get going, but the change might prove satisfactory to you.

* * *

Advancement in Telegraphy

I HAVE been thinking seriously of taking up telegraphy at our local business college The instructor is a first-class operator with more than twenty years experience, and many of his former students are working for railroads now.

I am nineteen years old, and do you think that the chances of securing employment are the same as a few years ago? I would certainly appreciate all the information you could give me concerning the telegraph profession

S. L.,
Butte, Mont

While it is a fact that railroads generally employ fewer telegraph operators than they did some years ago, owing to the vast improvements of automatic blocks and train control devices, there still is opportunity offered on many lines, and promotion usually is rather good in the telegraph service. It is a question, of course, of your ability to make yourself better than the average telegrapher, and if you can succeed in doing this, your success is assured.

* * *

In Tower Service

I AM interested in what system you have to offer for betterment. I'm a towerman of a large straight electric revolver, eighty-lever plant, which includes a drawbridge. My hours are at night from 11 P.M. to 7 A.M. I fail to see any advancement on our 75½ per hour. Seniority prevails and promotions are slim. I have been with them for the past nineteen years, sixteen years towerman.

F. J. B.,
New Jersey.

This department is designed to suggest ways and means for mental advancement chiefly, which will enable a man in any given position to prove himself worthy of a higher position not only by the practical experience, but the knowledge he has acquired. In your situation you are in a branch of railroad service where seniority prevails and where, as you say, promotions are rather slim. However, there is nothing to prevent you from taking every opportunity to make your chief know that you are about. Alertness to matters of safety, of economy and many other things which continually come before your attention at your post of duty, can be emphasized by taking

up matters that you think should have attention, with your superior. In this way you will find you have started on the first step upward. Try it out and you will see that it will work.

* * *

A Machinist

WHILE reading the January issue of your magazine I also noticed your page on Opportunity. I am a Rock Island machinist and am very much interested in their new motor cars as pictured on opposite from above mentioned (or page 304), therefore I take this opportunity of writing explaining my thoughts and wishes.

I would like to learn motor cars and to get with company or manufacturer with whom I might learn this line.

L. W. F.,
Trenton, Mo.

You will find that your general foreman will be glad to give you the opportunity you desire to acquaint yourself with motors, provided you wish to stay in the service of the Rock Island; or, if you prefer to make a change, you might address yourself to the various manufacturers of motor car equipment. The Westinghouse Electric Company, for instance, is one of them. In your present department, however, it seems that you enjoy a rather good position from which to work up along motor car lines.

* * *

Asks for Higher Learning

I MIGHT as well start at the beginning as anywhere else. I quit going to school when I was thirteen years old and went through the sixth grade. Then I started to work. Worked on and off until 1925 when I got on the B. & O. Railroad and have been there ever since. I like railroading better than any other thing I've ever done, and I would like to prepare myself for an official position. I am single, twenty-two years old and a brakeman. Have worked in yard, road and passenger. I rather prefer yard work. It is more interesting.

I realize it is a long grind before I will be promoted higher than conductor, for which promotion I am preparing now. After I get promoted to conductor I sure will need a better knowledge of railroading and a better education, but I do not know what to take up in night school that would help me most. Three years ago I took up a course on the railway conductor. After two lessons I saw it did not affect my work in the least, so I gave it up.

Now if you could outline a course of study for me from where I left off in school to college, I would appreciate it very much. I might not go through with it to college, but as far as I do it would help me a lot. You may be sure that if I wasn't interested I wouldn't take the trouble of writing to you, because I don't like to write letters.

S. K.,
Barberton, Ohio

You are now on your way to promotion, and your desire to improve yourself is indeed gratifying. If your chief had any idea of this attitude on your part, it would make him feel pretty good.

We fail to see where any particular correspondence course in railroading would be helpful to you. What you need is a course of study which will enable you to train yourself along general lines. If you will write to the Home Extension Department, Columbia University, and explain just your situation as regards education, they will be able to give you, much better than we, the type of home study you should pursue at this time. Please do that and at some future time let us know how you make out.

* * *

Engine Service

FOR the last ten years I have been an employee of the New Haven Road. Started as an engine wiper in 1920 and went firing in 1923. So at the present time I have seven years rights, but actually only fired for three years. Depression in business and big power has set me back so far that it doesn't look as though I'll ever get a break as far as being sure of even holding the spare board, to say nothing of a regular job.

Right now I'm working in the car repair shops of this road in Providence. Rated as a carman, my work really is in the air brake line. Consists of removing and replacing triple valves, cleaning and oiling cylinders and finally testing cars after above repairs. Also in wrecking service when required. Been at this part of the game for three years, but it looks as though there is no advancement. At least I can't see any. The rest of my service con-

sisted of engine-house clerk and some hostling. As a boy my ambition in life was, and still is, to be an engineer, but by the looks of things I guess I'll have to forget it as much as I hate to, although if I were sure of a steady job on any road in the U. S. A. I'd pull stakes to-morrow. Of course, I'd like to make some headway toward a bigger and better job where I am, and really amount to something besides a cog in the wheel, but I can't see any way out.

There is my problem and I sincerely hope you can put me on the right track toward something bigger and better. I am twenty-seven years of age and married. One child three years old is the rest of the family.

T. F. C.,
Providence, R. I.

You are facing the same thing a great many other men are facing to-day in so far as engine service is concerned. It is almost impossible to say just how long it might be before you have enough age to hold a road job, and being twenty-seven now you undoubtedly don't wish to wait until you are forty-five before you can be promoted.

It strikes us that the department you now are in offers you some advantages, especially since you are becoming rather expert on air brake equipment. A good heart to heart chat with your general foreman would be the best thing for you at this time. It is hard to say when engine service is going to be a little more attractive to the man who wants to climb up.

As to leaving your present post for some other road, it would be taking quite a chance. There are several of the Western roads to-day which have never been hurt much by increase in the size of power. Some of these roads are using more crews and employing more men to-day than ever before in history.

If you want to stay on the main line it seems to us that your best bet is train service. It may be possible for you to change over to train service on your own road.

We are sorry we can give you no more definite answer to your problem, but we trust that the few suggestions we have been able to give out will be helpful.

* * *

C. D. C., Los Angeles, Cal.—We think that the best we can give you would be to suggest that you have an immediate talk with your division superintendent. He, perhaps more than any one else that we can suggest, might be able to help you out. Your position indeed is a peculiar one and a serious one, and we think before anything else is done or any other measures attempted, a heart to heart talk with your division superintendent should be had.

* * *

Electrical Department

I AM taking this opportunity of asking you if I would have a possible chance of making the grade in railroading. I have always been interested in railroading, but have never had the good fortune to get into the transportation line of it. I am now working as electrician apprentice for the Union Pacific Railroad at its Omaha shops. I am not quite twenty years old and have a good service record with the Union Pacific.

E. V. H.,
Omaha, Neb.

Since you are still under age and already have a foothold in the electrical department of the Union Pacific Railroad, we do not see that there is much we can tell you at this time except in a general way. You still have several years in which to work out your future and, unless you are discontented in the shops, the proper course for you to follow is strict application to your duties and the pursuance of such extra knowledge that you feel you need to enable you to advance in your particular line of endeavor. If you are dissatisfied with electricity, and feel that you ought to be in the transportation end of the business, you ought really to consider a change as soon as you have reached the age of twenty-one. You could transfer perhaps or rehire to engine service or train service.

The Boomers' Corner

WELL, boomers, here we are! By popular request we've got not a column or a corner in The Spot department, but we've got a whole blasted crew room to ourselves. So many of the boomers and ex-boomers from one end of the country to the other, had begun to write in that we found The Spot department wasn't going to have enough room for all that tonnage, so we got busy and laid down some new trackage, planned out a lead, built a new yard and now we are ready to shove down and classify all boomers' correspondence right here under separate heading.

This department now will be tickled pink to take care of any correspondence, boomers and ex-boomers, care to carry on, where they have no permanent address and wish to receive mail care of this magazine.

You may remember in the December number that the editor called for the whereabouts of an old boomer pal of his with whom he used to travel The honorable and notable Jack Gilligan, fireman, brakeman and harvest hand. You can imagine the editor's joy when the following was received on the 30th of December:

Christmas Day,
Tucumcari, N. M

DEAR BOOMER:

Well, old-timer, I just landed in this place on the bum as usual, only more so, and had to stay over here for a day or two. I was passing a drug store and saw that our old pal, the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, had a comeback. As usual, I got a yen on and bought a copy to see if it was as good as of old Right away I found where you wanted to know where I was

Well, kid, we had lots of ups and downs, mostly downs, when I left Jimtown those many years ago. I figured then that you were going to quit the railroad and literary field and become a North Dakota farmer. I have often wondered what became of you, for I have never forgot the story you wrote the night we had to talk an operator into holding a board against a freight train so that we might make the necessary traveling connections. I don't think you have forgot that either.

Well, kid, after I left you, I reformed. I went to the Oregon Short Line and home-guarded until January, 1925. I got crippled up some November 13, 1928, on the Santa Fe, working out of Needles in train service

Maybe you don't know it, but Slim Cullen is home-guarding at San Berdoo.

I wish you would write me at El Paso, Texas, General Delivery.

Your pal,

JACK GILLIGAN.

Since then a rapid fire correspondence has transpired, with the result that Gilligan is now on his way to New York for a reunion.

Boomer Brown

DEAR BOOMER:

I have before me two of the best magazines it has been my good fortune ever to read. They are the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINES of December, 1929, and January, 1930.

There has been requests from ex-rails for letters, and I am right here and now going to kick off my brakes, release my air and let go what I've got to say, for I am one of the boys mentioned in Mr. Earp's story on the boomer. I've boomed and boomed all over this little old U. S. With my name on more railroad pay rolls than I have fingers, although that was fine in days past. I found out to my sorrow that it did not pay. Because now I have a wife and five youngsters I wanted a steady job and, of course, after trying all sorts of jobs, my feet itched to be back on the road.

I applied to every superintendent or trainmaster's office in Kansas City, that being where I chose to settle down, but with all my service letters, passes and credentials did I get a job? I should say not! Why? Because, for example, here is why: I went to the T. M.'s office of one of the largest railroads running into K. C. Said road a few years ago would have fired a man in a second had they found any stinger or snake receipts on him. I asked for a job braking

and the T. M. asked if I was up to date. No, sir, I wasn't any more. Very foolish of me, I know, to have dropped out when I quit railroading, but I would like to get in again Well, said he, go see Mr. So and So who is the griever here. If he OK's you I'll give you a job.

To the griever I go and tell him my story. "Sorry, Buddy, but you are out of luck. Unless you have been working for at least thirty days steady just past I can't let you in" So there I was, able and willing to fill the bill. Can't get a job without a card and can't get a card without a job.

Another road I tried looked over my credentials. Too numerous to mention. Good proof that I knew my stuff, so the Super said, but said he: "You have too many service letters. If I did put you on you would be rejected at Chicago. You have worked too many places."

What boomer hasn't? I ask you. These two examples were the reasons, one or the other at every railroad office, so I again ask you how can a boomer, who wants to quit booming, stick to the occupation of his calling?

G. W. Brown,
Ex-Shack and Snake.

We know it is tough, Boomer, we know it is tough, but you never can tell when you are going to get a break.

He's Looking for His Pal

Maybe some of you fellows who used to team up with Boomer Daley would like to get in touch with him.

Dear Boomer:

Congratulations from a humble reader, from earlier days to the resurrection. Every page, line, including front and back cover, are recalling days that we roamed the long, long rail, to haul the cattle, to harvest the wheat, the beets, etc. My copy at my right hand side lights up the dim recollections and quickly comes the almost human likeness of many an old broken knuckle long since gone to the scrap heap. Oh! Well, sentiment is the make-up of a former boomer that played the C. B. & N. P., Santa Fe, C. & S., D. & R. G., Great Western, North Western, C. M. & St. P., U. P., S. P., and a number that slips my memory. Last letter 1923. Done! All washed up in fifteen years and still useful. Made the leap into the automobile industry.

Didn't do as well as Walter P. Chrysler, who left the rail and blazed a trail across the automotive world. Now crowding forty, married. Not a Harvey girl. And a wonderful little daughter.

It's true about being in the blood, old rails. Imagine if it could be possible for us all to be gathered together again, with a sumptuous feed before us, lights from clear boards, the smell of steam and smoke to give us atmosphere. Many a train would be made up. The Y. M. that rode the bicycle, B. O. tags that never went to the rip, how he flagged No. 10, without lamps, guns only, a bottle of lightning bugs, her nose looking right in the back door of the crummy. Well, no use to dream and talk unless the other fellow has the same privilege. Before we cut off for spot, let's remember each other with a card no matter where we are.

My flag was H. H. McDonold before the war, and after the real monicker appended below. Let's all take three big drinks to the long life and continued success of a greater, stronger, finer organ, the Railroad Man's Magazine, and douse the glims. In conclusion, it is my sincere wish to read by your hands of your present progress in the old game, or whatever may be your lot now. In grateful anticipation we await an avalanche of cards.

Your old boomer pal,

W. F. Dailey,
8600 Epworth Bld., Detroit, Mich.

Editor: A thrill or two from the above later

An Old Boomer Speaks

Here's another lad who would like to hear from the boys he used to team with. You will find plenty of color in in his letter.

Dear Boomer:

I am overflowing with steam—wet steam—in the glad news of this old "rail's" yarn book; gosh, man, it sure is fine to read over the things done years ago; and, incidentally, I would like to ask a question, *i. e.*—Am I classed as a boomer? . . . I began railroading at seventeen, hired as a brakeman at Desoto, Missouri, about the year after Garfield was assassinated. Unfortunately I forget the trainmaster's name there, for my stay was so short . . . only one night. I was fired for showing the super how to clear the track at a wreck . . . quite a feat and logical for a youth of seventeen to tell a seasoned old trouper like the super what to do . . . and how!

Like all youngsters, we see things in a different light, see the mistakes of older ones, just like they see our mistakes. My father used his influence to get me on the road, and the first call was for a wreck. I was all pepped up and excited over the thrilling fact of being a brakeman, so filled with ego was I that I did not speak friendily to the call boy, though we were chums before I become an official brakeman . . . hotzicgity.

After being fired for what the super called "nerve," I decided to ramble out in the world and look for another job; my father was section boss and offered me a position again tamping ties, but it was not to my liking, so I went South to Poplar Bluff, the first division, and with my nerve impressed

the yardmaster there with my ability so that he hired me to go out on a branch line which ran to Birds Point, just across the river from Cairo. One of the regular men on the run was drunk and unable to work. And I often thought, afterward, he was not to blame for getting soused after a trip over that pike

I think it is one hundred and fifteen, or twenty, miles from Poplar Bluff to Birds Point; anyway at that time there were saw mills so close together that a man had no use for the engine on the drag only to pull loads out of lumber yards and put empties in. It was simply a lengthy yard, with no limit, and the brakeman walked from one mill to the other, or from one switch to the next, all day long pulling out and setting in, switching, cursing and all the features of re-railing cars off the end of blind spurs, trucks off from being pulled over lumber across the tracks between cars as we pulled them out, and many other things

After walking some fifty miles of the trip, or near that, before dinner, or lunch, as one calls it now, it was well along in the late afternoon. All day without eating and a lot of hard work climbing high to twist a few now and then, and release a few brakes, to say nothing about dragging several tons of chains about from one place to another for chaining up cars with drawheads out so we could make the desired moves for the mill men, I ate my lunch with tears in my eyes, and when through, I learned it was only a few miles to Charleston, a station where another line crossed the one I was slaving on—so I slipped out the back door of the restaurant and hied myself away to freedom—I wanted a job braking . . . not skulldragging.

I have worked on almost every one of the Western pikes, been hired and fired regularly and am now down to a watchman's job way out here in Oregon, but I still live over the old days when a brakeman. I sure like Earp's stuff. He is good!

CHARLES ANTHONY ROACH,
269 Market Street, Portland, Ore

Missing Men

In addition to his letter in this department, Boomer Brown (G. W.) of 743 Island Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, makes a call for his old pal John Torbett, brakeman.

Last time I was with him was when we quit the G. T. W., Battle Creek, Michigan, in February, 1924. We drew our pay and went to Chicago and got my wife, and the three of us celebrated her birthday. Remember the cream banana pie, John?

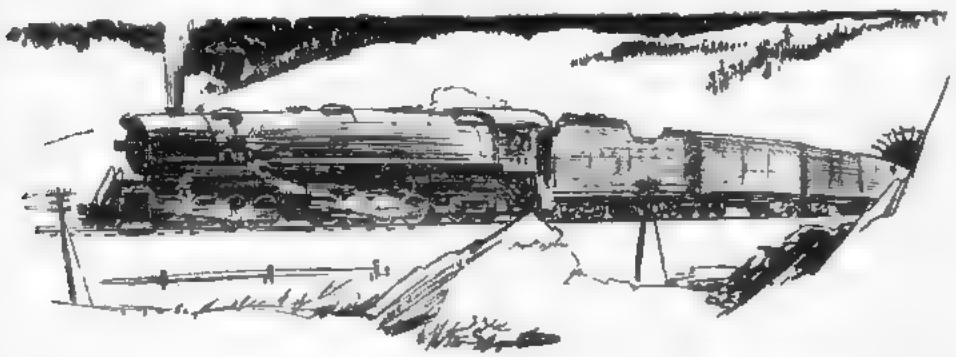
M. E. Mize, at Knob, Shasta County, California, wants to know the whereabouts of Lorn Asher, who from 1912 to 1919 was a brakeman on the C. B. & Q. at Galesburg, Illinois.

George O. Berky, of 331 W. Marion Street, Elkhart, Indiana, wants to know the whereabouts of Charles Gray, who was firing on the Madison Division out of Adams, Wisconsin, C. & N. W. R R. in 1914.

* * *

It has been suggested by several brothers who have written in and some of whom have asked that their names not be published, that we ought to have an emblem, a card and some secret works for the great association of boomers and ex-boomers of North America.

Now, before we do anything arbitrary, we certainly would like to have an expression of opinion from a bunch of the boys. What do you think? Address The Boomers' Corner and speak freely.



On the Spot

ABOUT the best news we can possibly start this department off with this month is that our old pals Honk and Horace are marked up to arrive in the April number, which will be available on April 1. We can just about hear the hoarse cheer that is going up as these words are dropped, and we will hint a little in advance and tell you that you certainly have got something mighty fine to look forward to; but what is the use of taking up all this valuable space when elsewhere in this number you will find a complete announcement which will tell you all about it? We just felt that we had to say something here because these paragraphs will answer quite a slew of letters that have been coming in yelling for Honk and Horace.

Another thing that has attracted a lot of attention since the January issue, is the list of railroad terms that we carried. Quite a number of the boys are sending in words and their definitions which were not contained in the original list, and next month we are going to bring it up to date.

And still the well wishers are with us, to wit:

* * *

Thanks a Lot

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE.

You have been in the "hole" a long time What's been the grief? Break a drawbar, have a hot box or did they "tie you up" at fifteen hours and fifty-nine minutes?

I have missed RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE plenty since you discontinued its publication. The writer is a grandson of an early hogger who pulled freight and passengers on the B. & O. in 1855, and the son of a man who was a car hand, conductor, yardmaster and trainmaster successively on the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf; Kansas and Pacific; the Mop and the Pedro. The writer spent all of his time spading black diamonds into a nine by twelve, mostly on pikes on the Rockies and the Missouri Valley. So you can see why I was overjoyed when I saw you call in your flag and head out onto the main. Now that you have become 1st 1930 in place of Extra 1929, I hope you succeed in holding your "rights."

I want to congratulate you on bringing the magazine back and I am personally slipping you a fistful of tissue to bat you through on time for the next twelve trips

TALLOW POT.

A. E. F. Rail Stories Coming

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

Was very glad to see the RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE, in print again, and while the old

familiar red cover was gone, the table of contents looked quite natural indeed and was like greeting an old friend to read of Jones the Boomer.

Still have about a dozen old copies around, for I read it until it was bumped off its regular run

I feel that there is a wealth of material for stories, both the true and the entertaining variety, in the incidents happening to the railroad regiments overseas. They are even broadcasting these dramas over the air, and while many of us never had the good fortune to belong to a railroad outfit, most of those who went across rode on the French and later the American trains. France did not seem so far from home after I had my first glimpse of some U. S. consolidations leading some box cars along instead of "Hommes 40" affairs.

Some twenty-odd years ago I read several installments of a railroad story entitled "The Fantom Flyer." It was a railroad mystery story and very interesting, and ever since have been trying to get it in complete form. In your travels as a railroad editor have you ever run by a board of that name? Am sorry I do not know the name of the author, but the name of the story is quite distinctive and easy to remember, and has always stuck with me

Not only are the stories interesting, but especially the features dealing with locomotive development and best of all are the locomotive pictures. May you have them bigger and better and more frequent with every issue, and twice a month issues are not too frequent. Highball, let's get out of town.

R. L. W.
Detroit, Mich.

Can any of you boys help on the "Fantom Flyer"?

* * *

Just to Keep the Records Straight

Editor Railroad Man's Magazine

I used to read the old Railroad Man's Magazine years ago—to the great discouragement of my family, who thought I could devote my time to better advantage—and have been greatly pleased by the new issues so far I hope you can find space for reprints of some of the stories and articles from the old issues occasionally, as I believe that some of them might be of great interest in view of the changes since they were written

My particular inspiration for this letter is found in two articles in the January number.

In "Coupling Up" Mr. Charles Frederick Carter explains, for the benefit of those who don't know what it was, just how the Miller hook originated, what it was and where it was used. There is an omission in that article which might be called to his attention. The Miller hook coupler is still in use on the Boston, Revere Beach and Lynn Railroad, a narrow gauge line between East Boston and Lynn, with a branch to Winthrop. Until it was electrified, this line was one of the few in the United States to use vacuum brakes. I was over the line in September and noted the peculiar couplers on the cars at that time. When I asked about them, I was told how they worked

The second item about which I am impelled to write is the list of the longest tunnels in the world, on page 248 of the January number. I believe that the Arlberg Tunnel, on the Arlberg Railway between St. Anton am Arlberg and Langen, should be included in this list of tunnels. This tunnel is shown by a note, printed on pages 246 and 250 of the Austrian Pocket Timetable (Osterreichischer Taschen Fahrplan) for the summer of 1929, to be 10.27 km. long. Reduced to English measures it is equal to 6.37 miles and is, therefore, 0.26 miles longer than the Moffat Tunnel.

Any list of the principal railway tunnels of the world should, therefore, give the Arlberg Tunnel sixth place and the Moffat Tunnel seventh place. Trains are operated by electric power between Saalfelden, 113 km. west of Salzburg, and Bregenz, Austria.

With best wishes for the success of the magazine, I am,

W. F. K., Jr.,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

How About the Crummy?

F. H. S. sent in the following note:

What do you know about this? Where will the flagman ride? Will freight trains continue to haul a hack on the rear for the flagman and to carry supplies such as flags, fusees, torpedoes, material for fixing hot boxes, etc., for the crew who sleep in the hack when away from home?

Attached to the brother's note was the following newspaper clipping:

Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 20 (UP)—The red caboose trailing the end of a string of freight cars soon may become a thing of the past.

A new post of command for the conductor is being tried out by Kansas City Southern Railroad. He has been moved from the caboose to less restful headquarters near the engine

Since freight trains have been drawn across western prairies the caboose has been towed at the end of the cars. In the old days it was the headquarters of guards and soldiers who rode with trains to protect them from marauding Indian tribes. It also was the office of the conductor, the rendezvous for train crews while in sidings and the rest room and luncheon quarters for workers

But officials of the Southern found it was a poor place to handle the train, and to modernize the make-up of the train they attempted to move the caboose. No place could be found for it and after several experiments it was delegated back to the end of the train.

Now they have constructed a glass incased cab on the coal tender, big enough for two men—the conductor and head brakeman—and from this point the train is being controlled.

The post, officials of Southern reported, is ideal for control of the train. The engineer and the conductor can communicate easily and actions of the train can be closely observed by the conductor

On new engines C. E. Johnson, president of the road, said the cab will be an elevated cupola at the back end of the tender, with seats facing each other for the conductor and head brakeman. The equipment, he predicted, would become standard on all lines soon.

How about you fellows out there on the Kansas City Southern? Why don't you write us a line and let us know what is happening to your little red wagons?

He's Looking for His Pals

From out of the Far West comes the following letter from George L. Banks, who wrote the true experience story in the December number called "The Stolen Jail." You can see for yourself what Brother Banks wants:

Do You Remember When

Now that we railroad men have got a real magazine all our own again there are several interesting things that I am hoping to read in its columns.

Of course, a railroad man's magazine has got to be up to date like any other publication, but there were some things that happened about forty years ago that besides pleasing us old-timers in the telling are interesting enough to give a thrill to the younger generation.

How many of you remember the Blue Cut Robbery? I saw the James and Younger gang about three days afterward, but if some member of the crew of the train that was held up was to write the story it would be more interesting than any movie thriller ever screened.

Do any of you old-timers on the Rock Island cut-off at Gallatin, Missouri, remember when Frank James was tried there? I lost a day to go to that trial.

And do any of the same gang remember when Jump and Smith killed a railroad teamster by the name of William E. Gladson and threw his body in an old well? They were both hung on a scaffold just off the railroad right of way and in plain sight of where I was then working.

Do any of your old-timer railroaders remember when they found lead at Galena, Kansas, and, not knowing what the zinc ore was, used it to ballast the railroad tracks? I have helped tamp up ties with nearly pure zinc ore.

Do any of the old-timers on the C. M. & St. P. remember when Contractor Goode built the approach to the Chicken Bristle bridge out of frozen chunks of earth and what a mess there was when that dump thawed out?

Does any old-timer remember when the Gould Branch from Butler, Bates Co., Missouri, built out toward Kansas and struck a three-foot vein of good marketable coal in every cut?

Do any of the old-timers at Polo, Missouri, remember when the new branch put on a big mogul engine with a pilot so wide that it tore into the station platform and wrecked the train?

Last, but not least, do you remember when the pay train used to come along the twenty-seventh of every month and pay you for what you had done the month previous? A pay day was something to look forward to in those days, let me tell you.

Now if some of you old-timer railroad men will write about some of these interesting places and happenings of old time railroad days, I will sure read them with interest, and if some one else don't, why, fait and bejabbers, I will meself.

Canada Shorty

The following note from an old-timer hits us right between the eyes. For his information will say that there will be some mighty good hobo stories soon:

EDITOR RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE:

This epistle from an ex-hobo, bindle-stiff, etc. Three cheers for a mag that at last arrived at the depot. It sure fills a void in a man's literature, a man who has railroad in his blood just as much as any rail who ever lived. I surmise I am also voicing the sentiments of my fraternity who are as much a part of railroading as the shacks that keep us hopping. Well, here's success and don't forget the bos' end when making up copy.

Yours for the clear,

CANADA SHORTY.

With the Poets

We are printing the following at the request of M. K., San Francisco, Cali-

fornia. This is reprinted from RAILROAD MAN'S MAGAZINE of fifteen years ago:

Casey Jones

BY T. LAWRENCE SEIBERT

(Copyrighted, 1909, by Newton and Seibert, Los Angeles, Cal.)

Come all of you rounders if you want to hear
A story about a brave engineer.
Casey Jones was the rounder's name,
On a six, eight-wheeler, boys, he won his fame
The caller called Casey at half past four—
Kissed his wife at the station door,
Mounted to the cabin with his orders in his hand,
And he took his farewell trip to that promised land.

Chorus:

Casey Jones mounted to the cabin,
Casey Jones with his orders in his hand;
Casey Jones mounted to the cabin,
And he took his farewell trip to that promised land.

Put in your water and shovel in your coal,
Put your head out the window, watch them drivers roll.
"I'll run her till she leaves the rail,
'Cause I'm eight hours late with that Western mail."
He looked at his watch, and his watch was slow;
He looked at the water, and the water was low.
He turned to the fireman, and he said
"We're going to reach Frisco, but we'll all be dead."

Chorus:

Casey Jones going to reach Frisco,
Casey Jones, but we'll all be dead.
Casey Jones going to reach Frisco;
We're going to reach Frisco, but we'll all be dead.

Casey pulled up that Reno hill,
He tooted for the crossing with an awful shrill;
The switchman knew by the engine's moans
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.
He pulled up within two miles of the place,
Number Four staring him right in the face.
He turned to the fireman, said: "Boy, you'd better jump,
'Cause there's two locomotives that's a going to bump."

Chorus:

Casey Jones, two locomotives;
Casey Jones, that's a going to bump.
Casey Jones, two locomotives;
There's two locomotives that's a going to bump.

Casey Jones said, just before he died:
"There's two more roads that I'd like to ride"
Fireman said: "What could that be?"
"The Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe."
Mrs. Jones sat on her bed a sighing—
Just received a message that Casey was dying.
Said: "Go to bed, children, and hush your crying,
'Cause you got another papa on the Salt Lake Line"

Chorus:

Casey Jones! Got another papa,
Mrs. Casey Jones, on that Salt Lake Line.
Mrs. Casey Jones, got another papa,
And you've got another papa on that Salt Lake Line.

We are also glad to oblige another reader with Owen Hugh O'Neil's sentimental ballad:

The Section Boss's Daughter

BY OWEN HUGH O'NEIL

Somehow the sky is bluer than it ever used to be,
And the golden sunshine brighter than before;
And though we burst an air-hose when we're halfway up the hill
It doesn't seem to matter any more.
Somehow it doesn't matter if we don't get in on time;
Somehow the long and heavy grades are easier to climb;
Somehow life's little troubles all have drifted far away—
Since the section boss's daughter smiled to me one sunny day

There's just a little shanty where the old hand-car is kept,
And near by a cottage close beside the track,
With some rambling roses climbing 'round the windows and the doors,
And a little kitchen garden at the back,
Where the section boss, of evenings, with a trowel, rake and hoe,
Works among the green things growing in each little patch and row,
And I thought it plain and prosy as a section-house could be—
Till the section boss's daughter kissed her finger tips to me.

Somehow the run seems shorter than it ever was before;
The mile-posts aren't quite so far apart;
The hour-hand travels faster 'round the dial of my watch,
Since the section boss's daughter won my heart
For the gleaming of the lovelight in her glances and her smiles

Lightens all the dreary labors, shortens all the lonely miles;
And so it will be always as we doublehead through life—
For the section boss's daughter promised she would be my wife

And now here is another piece of verse which expresses a magnificent sentiment. It was written to honor the return of our magazine in December last:

Song of Welcome

By Scott Thomas

Providence, R. I.

We have gone down to the station, to see a friend depart,
We have watched him disappearing, with a lonesome sort of heart,
But our lonesomeness is lightened and we feel a lesser pain,
With the thought of his returning and his presence once again.

We have gone down to the station to see the friend return,
We have given him a welcome that has never ceased to burn,
And the knowledge he is with us is the payment in the end,
That justifies the longing for an old departed friend.

Ten years ago your magazine was taken from our rack,
And since that time we've longed to read of engines, trains and track,
No other publication seemed to fill the void at all,
That your leaving left upon us when you did no longer call.

But now, the picture changes, we are happy and serene,
Once more we have the pleasure of the Railroad Magazine,
And the boys from Maine to Frisco will be happy with the tales
Unfolded in your pages by the folks who ride the rails.

To your editors, reporters, and others of your crew,
We wish success unstinted in everything you do,
We hope each run you make to press will have all signals clear,
And that your train of thought will be successful year by year.

We are indeed deeply indebted to Mr. Thomas for his kindness.

The Coupon

Are you taking advantage of this coupon? In each number now, since the magazine resumed publication, one of these coupons has appeared. We have explained that any reader who fills out three from consecutive issues, may make his choice of any original drawing which has appeared in any issue of the magazine illustrating a story. This does not include photographs. There are some mighty fine pictures appearing in Railroad Man's and we feel pretty sure that a lot of you fellows would like to have them around to frame for your room at home, your caboose, your locker. Here it is—

"HERE'S MY VOTE"

Editor,
Railroad Man's Magazine,
280 Broadway, N. Y. C., N. Y.

The stories I like best in this issue of the magazine are as follows:

1 .....
2 .....
3 .....
4 .....
5 .....

I did not like.....
because.....
Name.....
Occupation.....
Street.....
City..... *State*.....

[3]

Encouraged by $100

"Perhaps you will be interested to learn that I have succeeded in selling a short story to 'War Birds,' aviation magazine, for which I received a check for $100. The story is the first I have attempted. As the story was paid for at higher than the regular rates, I certainly felt encouraged."

Darrell Jordan,
Box 277, Friendship, N. Y.

How do *you* know *you can't write?*

Have you ever tried?

Have you ever attempted even the least bit of training, under competent guidance?

Or have you been sitting back, as it is so easy to do, waiting for the day to come some time when you will awaken, all of a sudden, to the discovery, "I *am* a writer"?

If the latter course is the one of your choosing you probably *never will write*. Lawyers must be law clerks. Engineers must be draftsmen. We all know that, in our times, the egg does come before the chicken.

It is seldom that anyone becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their insight, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

That is why the Newspaper Institute of America bases its writing instruction on journalism—continuous writing—the training that has produced so many successful authors.

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NEWSPAPER Institute training is based on the New York Copy-Desk Method. It starts and keeps you writing in your own home, on your own time. Week by week you receive actual assignments, just as if you were right at work on a great metropolitan daily. Your writing is *individually* corrected and constructively criticized. A group of men with 182 years of newspaper experience behind them are responsible for this instruction. Under such sympathetic guidance, you will find that (instead of vainly trying to copy some one else's writing tricks) you are rapidly developing your own distinctive, self-flavored style—undergoing an experience that has a thrill to it and which at the same time develops in you the power to make your feelings artic late.

Many people who *should* be writing become awe-struck by fabulous stories about millionaire authors and therefore give little thought to the $25, $50 and $100 or more that can often be earned for material that takes little time to write: stories, articles on business, fads, travels, sports, recipes, etc.—things that can easily be turned out in leisure hours, and often on the impulse of the moment.

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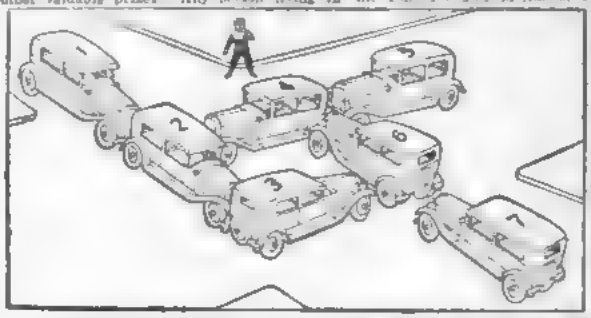
For advertising purposes I am going to give absolutely free a brand new six-cylinder Special Six Nash four-door Sedan, an Oldsmobile two-door Sedan, a De Soto two-door Sedan, a Pontiac [illegible] Sedan, an Essex two-door Sedan, a Whippet four-door Sedan, and a Chevrolet [illegible] Sedan, as my first seven gifts in a splendid new [illegible] type radios, a Victor Orthophonic Victrola and other valuable prizes. Any person living in the United States or city of Chicago may enter an answer to this puzzle except employees of the W. D. Boyce Company or members of their families or winners of automobile or cash prizes in any of our previous offers or members of their families.

Solve This Traffic Puzzle



In the picture there are 7 cars in a bad traffic jam. None of them can move forward, for each car is blocked by the one in front of it. One of these cars must be backed out. Which one? The traffic policeman seems to be stumped. Can you straighten out the tangle for him? Only one car must be moved backward, and if you pick out the right one you will see how it is done. It is not necessary to back up any of the others. Send the number of the car which when backed out will relieve this traffic jam, and if your answer is correct you may be qualified for this opportunity.

$500.00 for Promptness We are not only giving the sedans, radios and so forth in our big prize list amounting to over $6,000.00, but are also giving an additional $500.00 cash for promptness to the winner of first prize if he or she has been prompt. Thus the first prize winner will receive the Nash Sedan and $500.00 in cash, or $1,845.00. Find the car which when backed out will relieve this traffic jam and send the number of it in a letter or on a post card, or you can mark the car on the picture and send it to me. Be sure to write or print your name and address plainly. All who answer correctly can share in the prizes in cash. Duplicate prizes paid in case of tie. ANSWER TODAY. ARTHUR MESKE, Dept. 715, 510 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

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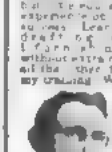

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Address .....

Town ..... *State* .....

DULCIE clenched her little fists in defiance of the man before her.

"You are not engaging a maid or chauffeur!" she cried. "You have no right to insult me! If you force me in this dastardly fashion to play the game of pretending as your brother's wife I warn you I will make you pay! You cannot use me to serve your base purpose and then fling me aside. I will marry your brother!"

A sneer crossed his handsome face.

"I think not," he answered evenly. "Any attempt on your part to double-cross me and I will tell the world your secret!"

Caught in a trap! What could she do?

March 8th *Read—*

THE MARRIAGE TRAP

By Madeleine Sharps Buchanan

THE UNKEPT TRYST
By Betty Bennett

MOONBEAM GIRL
By Ellen Newman

All Story contains many and varied contributions by famous authors, featuring love stories of the American girl.

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REDEEMED BY LOVE
By Edna Ettinger

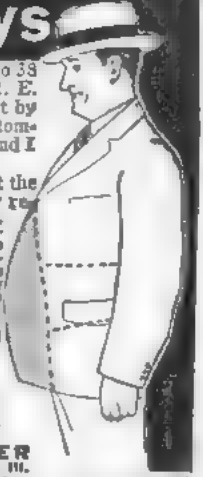
THE BRIDE'S FATE
By Manon Gregory

All in the issue of March 8th

ALL-STORY

20c *The Magazine of Beautiful Love Stories* 20c

10 Inches Off Waistline In 35 Days



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It may be in the neck back hips, stomach, liver, legs or arms. Wherever it is the chart will help to show you the location and cause of your ailment. For instance this chart will help you locate vermiform appendix pains. Hundreds of lives might have been saved if people had known the location and character of the pain and had received proper attention.

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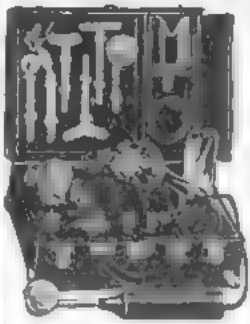

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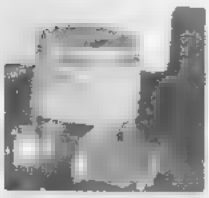

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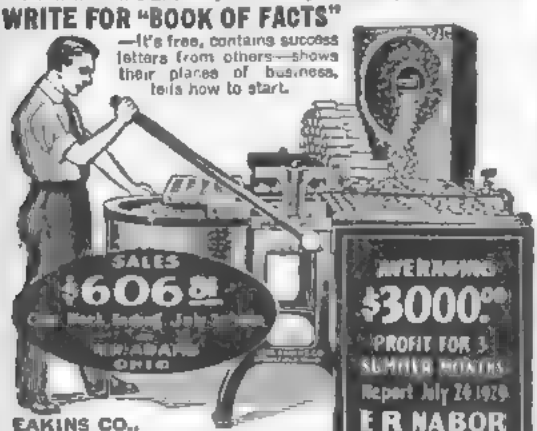

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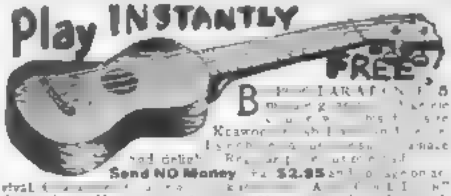

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	30x4.95	2.90	1.35	32x4	2.95	1.15
	28x5.25	2.95	1.35	32x4	2.95	1.15
	30x5.25	2.95	1.35	32x4½	3.20	1.45
	31x5.25	3.20	1.35	32x4½	3.20	1.45
	30x5.77	3.20	1.40	34x4½	3.45	1.45
	32x6.00	3.20	1.40	33x5	3.60	1.75
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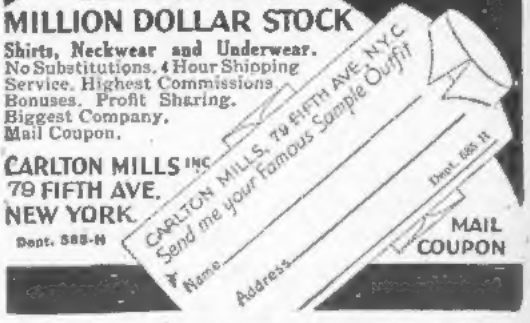

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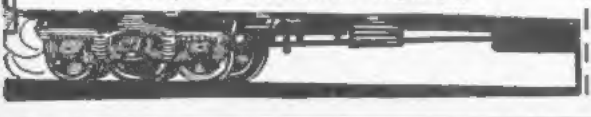

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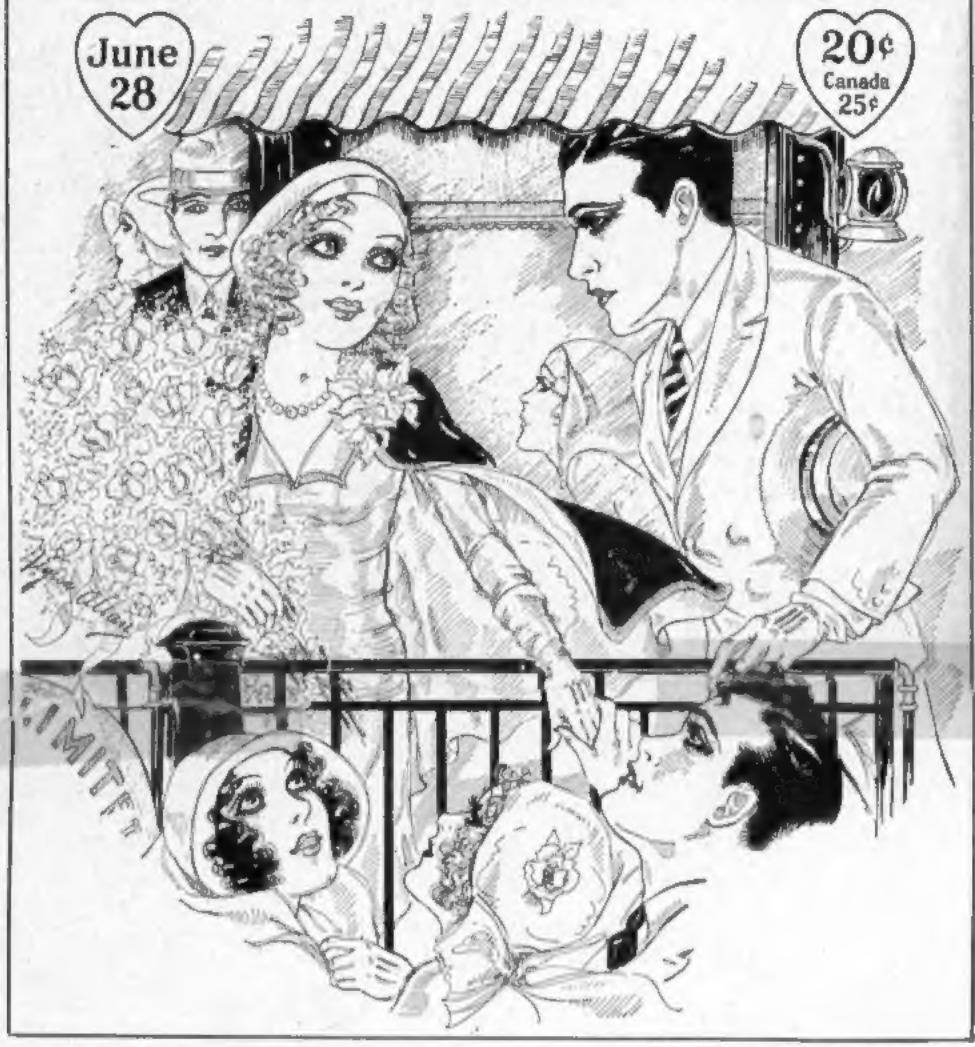

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